

Allied leaders claim bunker was legitimate military target



Baghdad grief: a woman standing in a row of bodies removed from the bombed shelter. The picture, shot by CNN, was cleared by Iraqi censors

Hundreds of Iraqis killed in shelter

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

HUNDREDS of women and children were killed and wounded when American bombers blasted a packed air raid shelter in Baghdad yesterday. The heavy civilian toll, the greatest in a single incident in the war, stunned the world and led to renewed questioning of the bombing campaign.

Allied leaders moved swiftly to defend the attack, saying that the bunker was a legitimate military target. But the huge loss of life will certainly have a devastating

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impact on public opinion, much as the sinking of the Belgrano did in the Falklands conflict.

Western reporters quoted rescuers and residents at the scene as saying that some 400 people were killed when two bombs struck at dawn.

Moving aggressively and in concert to avert a public relations disaster, American spokesmen in Washington and Riyadh suggested that President Saddam Hussein might deliberately have put Iraqi citizens inside the building as part of a macabre publicity stunt to inflame international opinion.

The White House spokesman, Martin Fitzwater, said the loss of civilian lives was "truly tragic", but the bunker was a well-known military target. It was an active military command and control facility, giving instructions directly to Iraqi forces. In Riyadh, Brigadier-General Rich-

ard said that the bunker had been upgraded from a civilian shelter in 1985, had become particularly active in communicating with Iraqi forces in Kuwait during the past two weeks and had recently had its roof camouflaged. Military personnel had been regularly seen around the bunker and communications emanating from it had been intercepted. "We don't feel like we attacked the wrong bunker or made a mistake," he added. It would not have been attacked were it known that civilians were inside.

Another American military official said that the bunker had been transmitting military signals up to the time it was attacked. "Those weren't five-year-old kids on the radio and telephones," he said. But in Baghdad, the manager of the shelter in the western district of Amriya-

said: "We didn't have a single military man in the shelter. It is allocated to civilians." The health minister, Abdul-Salam Mohammed Saeed, said there were no military targets in the area. "This was a criminal, pre-meditated, pre-planned attack against civilians."

In spite of the hasty moves to repair the public relations damage, the attack is certain to increase concern, especially in the Soviet Union, that the allies are exceeding the UN Security Council resolution that empowers them to use "all necessary means" to drive Iraq from Kuwait.

At home, the bombing revived memories of the sinking of the Argentine cruiser, General Belgrano, in May 1982 by the Royal Navy submarine, HMS Conqueror. More than 300 Argentine sailors died in that attack, which had an emotional and psychological impact on the British public since it marked the first heavy loss of life before the ground war began.

The death of so many civilians in suburban Baghdad may have a similar effect since it will remind the public of the reality of war and the prospect of substantial casualties on both sides when the ground campaign is launched.



Aziz to meet Gorbachev in Moscow on Monday

Moscow signals new Gulf initiative

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY
IN MOSCOW

MOSCOW appeared yesterday on the verge of announcing a new Gulf peace initiative after President Gorbachev's spokesman said that the talks in Baghdad by the Soviet special envoy, Yevgeni Primakov, had "given rise to hope".

The spokesman, Vitali Ignatenko, said Tariq Aziz, Iraq's foreign minister, would arrive in Moscow late on Sunday and meet Mr Gorbachev the next morning.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister was expected in Moscow last night and is due to see Mr Gorbachev today. The French foreign minister, Roland Dumas, spent Tuesday in Moscow, discussing the Gulf.

Mr Primakov, a Middle East specialist, set out for Baghdad on Monday, stopping in Tehran on the way. He was reportedly kept waiting several hours to see President Saddam Hussein, during which time he was shown bomb damage in Baghdad. Mr Primakov was eventually received by the Iraqi leader late in the evening. According to Mr Ignatenko, "the character of the talks gave cause for hope".

Statesman "shared", page 11
Kremlin rule, page 14

Charge of 'panic' as interest rate is cut half point

By ROBIN OAKLEY AND ANATOLE KALETSKY

THE government's decision yesterday to cut interest rates by half a point was condemned by the Opposition and by Sir Alan Walters, Margaret Thatcher's former economic adviser, as "too little, too late". Opposition politicians called it clear evidence of government panic under pressure.

The discordant tones being sung in Whitehall offered clear supporting evidence that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the prime minister had been pushed into an earlier cut than they had intended by the sheer weight of pressure from business, banks and Tory backbenchers growing increasingly nervous about the effect on businesses and mortgage-holders in their constituencies.

Building societies announced within minutes of yesterday's move that further cuts in official rates would be required a reduction in mortgage rates could be considered. However, the clearing banks all announced half point cuts on their base rates to 13½ per cent. While many Tories greeted the news with relief some felt that it did not go far enough and said they were hoping for a full one per cent cut in the Budget on March 19.

Economists in the City mostly predicted that there would be further cuts in the near future, but some warned that these could endanger sterling's position in the exchange rate mechanism and raise speculation about a snap election being called in June.

It was seen as significant that the cut was announced yesterday in advance of last night's Commons debate on the autumn economic statement rather than, more traditionally, on a Friday. John MacGregor, the Leader of the Commons and a former Treasury chief secretary, was obviously unaware of the impending cut when he defended the government's economic policies on the BBC Today programme yesterday morning.

Downing Street was suggesting that the decision in principle to begin lowering interest rates had been taken a week ago and that the government had merely awaited its usual 48-hour early sight of tomorrow's inflation figures to check they were still falling before going ahead.

The Treasury also insisted that the decision in principle was taken last week, in response to a series of economic indicators suggesting a sharp reduction in inflationary pressures. Another crucial factor in the timing was the decision by the German Bundesbank to raise its interest rates two weeks ago. There had been fears that sterling would fall sharply in response to the German action, but when the pound steadied last week, the time finally seemed right for a

cut in interest rates, according to Treasury officials.

The unexpected jump in retail inflation announced on Monday was one reason why the cut did not come even earlier. But the producer price index was judged to be an aberration by government economists and the markets' calm response to it provided further reassurance to the Chancellor.

The large number of party conflicting explanations for the timing of yesterday's move suggested a rushed political decision. And there was further evidence in the amount of Norman Lamont's speech yesterday devoted to countering the attack on government's policies by Sir Alan and the six prominent economists who called for an interest rate cut in a letter to *The Times* yesterday.

Mr Lamont stressed in yesterday's debate that the prime factor in any further interest rate cuts would be the need to keep Britain within its bands in the European exchange rate mechanism. Saying that a move outside the bands would

be "intolerable", he said that it would be irresponsible and misguided to think that interest rates could be cut regardless of sterling's position in the ERM.

The Chancellor told MPs: "We joined the ERM because it has a good track record for helping to close the inflation gap between its members. We accept the discipline membership requires. The overriding factor in setting interest rates now is the need to meet our ERM obligations and keep sterling inside its agreed bands. Our reward will be that over time the UK's inflation rate should converge on the best inflation performance in the ERM."

For the Opposition, the shadow chancellor, John Smith, said that interest rates should have been cut before the end of 1990 and the cut yesterday should have been one per cent.

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City reaction, page 29
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Slow thaw eases traffic problems

By RAY CLANCY

A SLOW thaw was expected for much of Britain today, a week after the first heavy snow falls, but freezing overnight temperatures and fog are still causing delays and treacherous conditions on the roads.

Weathermen predicted temperatures could rise to 4C in the west of the country with the east coast remaining a few degrees colder. "There have been rain showers in the west but these could turn to sleet or snow as they move south and eastward," a London weather centre spokesman said.

Motoring organisations and police forces reported problems on some roads, mostly due to freezing fog and black ice, especially on the M25. The AA said, however, that most drivers had heeded warnings and were taking extra care on motorways and main trunk routes.

British Rail said train services were back to normal except in the South where a number of coaches were still being repaired. A spokesman said: "The service will be

better than it has been but we are still working around the clock to repair stock damaged by ice and the cold weather. He estimated that around three-quarters of trains would be running today but that the normal timetable would not be back to normal until Monday.

As the thaw set in police and ambulance services again appealed to people not to walk on ice. "As everything melts the ice on ponds, rivers and canals, gets thinner and even more treacherous. It may look safe to walk on but never is," a Staffordshire police spokesman said.

North West Water put up warning notices after children tried to skate on the Worthington reservoir near Wigan. A spokesman said: "The ice is very thin and often hidden by a layer of snow. The water in the reservoir is very cold and difficult to escape from because of steep sides."

Burst pipes, page 3
Skiing policeman, page 22

Gemma case sentence

The man who snatched Gemma Lawrence, aged 7, from a caravan last summer and held her captive for 56 hours, was sent to Broadmoor without time limit yesterday. Paul Burton, aged 24, had admitted kidnapping Gemma, falsely imprisoning her, indecently assaulting her, escaping from police custody and another serious charge. Page 3

Oscar dancer

Dances With Wolves, directed by Kevin Costner (above) won 12 Oscar nominations, yesterday. *Dick Tracy* had seven and *Ghost* was chosen for the best film category. Page 11

Mandela fear

The trial of Winnie Mandela is on the verge of collapse after two witnesses refused to testify against her. One said that he feared for his life. Page 12

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Prostrate with grief at bomb site

FROM MARIE COLVIN IN AN UNCENSORED REPORT FROM BAGHDAD

THE scene outside the shelter yesterday was chaotic as men, desperate for news of their loved ones, jostled to reach the shelter. Members of the Popular Army were drafted in to help with the rescue effort. One man, aged about 30, in an army uniform simply leaned against a wall and wept. An older man lay prostrate on the pavement, beating his head on the concrete in uncontrollable grief.

Some of the men said that

since the bombing of Baghdad began on January 17 they had developed a routine, dining early and then dropping their families off at the shelter in the evening to spend the night in what they thought was safety. Until the morning. Many in the crowd were still in pyjamas, having rushed to the shelter when they heard the explosions, and were still hoping that someone would be found alive.

That, however, seemed un-

likely. Parked outside the entrance to the shelter was a battered open lorry. On it lay eight bodies, with blackened and twisted limbs protruding from under woollen blankets. Four of the bodies were those of small children. The head of a woman protruded from under a green, plaid blanket; her long hair was streaked with grey and blood ran down her face, her neck strained back as if in the rigidity of death.

Continued on page 22, col 1

For Piggie, love; but none lost on Saddam

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA
AND JOE JOSEPH

TAKE a long look at *Times* readers in your commuter train this morning and see if you can spot *Dorcas Piggie* or *Dent Leg*. If you can, tell them they have been sent a Valentine message in *The Times*. If you see *Angela*, tell her she has been sent several.

A *Times* reader loves someone called *Baggage* "more than dedicated Yak, boiled filage, curdled whell, steamed oryx, furred snails, hybrid gms and extruded ferret", which is, presumably, quite a lot.

Meanwhile in Saudi Arabia, with a warzone blend of the sentimental and the macabre, 35,000 British servicemen have been preparing to mark Valentine's Day. At the largest allied airbase in Eastern Saudi Arabia, a

group of 18 RAF men were yesterday busy writing Valentine's Day messages to President Saddam Hussein on the sides of 80 laser-guided bombs due to be delivered later by the Tornado jets they were servicing.

"Roses are red, oil is black, you look better with a knife in your back," read one of the parodies of the traditional messages of affection, which a RAF valentine stated crudely: "Roses are red, violets are blue. Up yours Saddam, this is for you."

Some of the messages transmitted home from RAF pilots and ground crew via the Press Association in London were as enigmatic as any. "To Chipmunk. Where is my bug - Biggles," read one. "Vonnors: I love you - Puncdy," read another, while a number were too explicit for publication.

Deeper into the desert, the intrepid

British staff of EFI (the Expeditionary Forces Institute), the desert equivalent of the NAAFI, were working overtime at frontline positions to deal with the flood of requests for the Interflora service they were operating for the occasion in harsh conditions close to occupied Kuwait.

The solitude of the desert, the imminence of what could be one of the more horrific land battles of the century and the strict Islamic restrictions in Saudi Arabia which have virtually eradicated women from the lives of the servicemen all added to the emotion of an occasion that most would normally have treated more lightheartedly.

An overwhelming response has been prompted from Britain, with over 250,000 letters and parcels arriving in Saudi Arabia in the past few days, all addressed to "A soldier

in the Gulf". This deluge from wellwishers in Britain to soldiers they have never met filled over 4,000 post bags and came on top of the normal Valentine's Day mail from family and loved ones.

About 20 French young ladies with fiancés serving in Saudi Arabia received a pre-Si Valentine's gift earlier this week when their menfolk signed acts of marriage, in keeping with French army law.

And in Florida, Judge Mary Lupo imposed what must be America's first valentine's sentence. She ordered Karen Grisham, a convicted hand-bag snatcher, to write 50 letters to lonely soldiers in the Gulf. "Who knows, I might even find the man of my dreams," Ms Grisham said.

Letters, page 15
Valentine messages, pages 18-21

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OUT NOW

Councils urged to breathe life into dull and outdated museums

By SIMON TAIT
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

LOCAL authority museums are often moribund with objects rotting in inadequate storage, and should be allowed to dispose of collections as part of an urgent rationalisation, according to a report published today by the Audit Commission.

Councils are being urged to reassess their museums and galleries and formulate proper collecting policies for them, particularly in respect of their educational role. "Some local authority museums are worthy but dull," the report says. "Despite the

The Road to Wigan Pier? Managing Local Authority Museums and Art Galleries (Compiled by the Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales; Stationery Office, £6)

emphasis on collection, many lack coherent themes. Some are also badly documented because they are poorly stored."

The commission blames underfunding and outdated methods of curating, and says that there should be more emphasis on marketing and customer care. Howard Davies, the commission's

controller, said: "The local authority contribution to the artistic life of the nation is not adequately recognised but it would be more appreciated if it were managed effectively. There is great scope for better and more lively management of museums and galleries."

The report acknowledges, however, that there are many good local authority museums, and singles out Leicestershire county council. Tim Schadla-Hall, the director of Leicestershire museums, said: "There are things in this report which will offend some museum curators, but it is a plea for more thoughtful policies and is probably the most helpful report

for 60 years. It opens up a much-needed debate on the function of local museums."

The report will be followed next month by another from the Museums and Galleries Commission, which is expected to draw similar conclusions. The commission has started a museums registration scheme to encourage the upgrading of standards by making special grants dependent on acceptance for registration.

There are 650 local authority museums in England and Wales attracting 20 million visits a year and costing £90 million, almost as much as national museums, which attract 24 million visits. About 40

per cent of local museums have been created since 1970.

Val Bot, curator of the Passmore Edwards museum in east London, said: "We are aware of these problems - I don't know of a museum which is not behind on its documentation - and we are doing our best to improve things. But in the present financial climate, when museums are not a statutory expenditure for local authorities, it is extremely difficult."

Her museum reopened last November after an 18-month refurbishment programme costing £128,000 but the funding from its parent authority, Newham coun-

cil, was obtained only after bitter debate. A further £280,000 is still needed to repair the roof. Miss Bot said: "We had to compromise with the council. Since we opened we have greatly increased attendances, but we have to close on two days a week and have reduced our opening hours. What the Audit Commission does not realise is that we are primarily serving the community, not creating a tourist attraction."

"Perhaps we aren't able to change our displays often, but no one says the National Gallery is static just because it has got all its pictures on the wall." Newham Council has voted against disposal

of collections. Encouragement for museums to dispose of objects is especially controversial following Derbyshire county council's decision to sell a number of items from its Buxton museum. While calling for clarification of the law on disposal, the report demands safeguards against asset-stripping.

Miss Bot acknowledged that objects could usefully be exchanged between museums, but said that disposal was unpopular. "People haven't forgotten the huge ethnographic collections that were checked out in the 1950s because we didn't realise their importance then."

Base rate cut not enough to reduce mortgages

By SARA MCCONNELL

HOMEOWNERS will not see a cut in mortgage repayments unless interest rates fall by at least another half a percentage point so borrowers whose rate is reviewed annually will still face higher payments.

The Halifax, the largest building society, set a rate of 14.5 per cent for its 1.3 million annual review customers on February 1. It said there were no plans to cut the rate without further base rate reductions. "The way the scheme works is that payments are fixed for a year but we will keep the scheme under review." About 680,000 customers on annual review would have to pay an average of £5 a month more if there was no change.

Lenders welcomed yesterday's 0.5 point cut in the base rate to 13.5 per cent but said it was still not low enough. John Bayliss, managing director of the Abbey National, said: "The cut in base rates is a good sign for homeowners as it marks the first step towards lower mortgage rates. This cut on its own will not be sufficient for us to change our mortgage rate. We look forward to a further cut of at least half a per cent to enable us to cut our rate."

Abbey National said that if the base rate fell by another half a percentage point, it would consider cutting its mortgage rate by half or three-quarters of a point.

The only lender to announce any rate reductions was the Britannia building society, the ninth largest. The society's fixed rate mortgage launched last week was cut by

0.45 points yesterday from 12.35 per cent to 11.9 per cent. Its Step Down mortgage rate, also announced last week, has been cut from 13.95 per cent to 13.5 per cent. The rate will come down by 1 point every six months until April 1993.

Banks also say they are waiting for a further cut before moving on mortgage rates although all the main clearing banks yesterday cut base rates to 13.5 per cent. Personal and business loans linked to the base rate will be cut by a half point immediately. However, most loans have either a fixed managed rate or are fixed for the term of the loan.

There will be no cuts in savings accounts until mortgage rates move, banks and building societies say. Any further fall in interest rates is likely to mean cuts in rates on the new tax exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) although some have guaranteed rates for certain periods.

● The property market yesterday saw the half point reduction in the base rate as an indication of confidence in the future rather than an immediate help (Christopher Warman writes). The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors welcomed the move and said it hoped it would lead to further reductions.

Next week's publication of the RICS house price survey is likely to indicate a pent-up demand that could begin to get the market moving again with the confidence of an interest rate cut.

Interest rate cut, page 1
Leading article, page 15



British Steel will lose 800 more jobs as trade shrinks

By TIM JONES, EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Steel said yesterday that more than 800 jobs would have to go at its Scunthorpe plant because of declining demand and weak trading conditions. The announcement came on the day that production ended at the Ravenscraig hot strip mill in Scotland, with the loss of 770 jobs.

The company has now announced 3,000 job losses since last May among its 52,000

workforce and further redundancies are expected as markets contract. Some of the jobs lost at Scunthorpe will be borne by the management and administrative staff.

The company said that while lower sales in Britain are in part being offset by additional export sales, these were highly competitive markets which demanded excellence in quality and low pricing in order to retain business. About 200 of the lost jobs at Scunthorpe will be taken over by specialist contracting companies who may employ some of those made unemployed.

● Anglia Television, which along with other ITV companies is suffering a large drop in advertising revenue, has written to all its 711 employees offering them voluntary redundancy and early retirement (Melinda Wittstock writes).

The Norwich-based ITV company, attempting to cut costs before the approaching

television franchise auction, will not make a decision on compulsory redundancies until next month, when it knows how many employees have accepted its offer.

Anglia would not say how many employees it intends to shed through natural wastage, although the total number would not be in the hundreds. "Compulsory redundancies are a last resort, but we can't rule them out altogether," a spokesman said.

Staff, including senior executives, have been offered one month's salary for every year of service up to a maximum of £30,000. The early retirement scheme offers employees lump sum payments of between £5,000 and £20,000.

The company, which has reduced its staff from 850 in the past two years, is the latest in the ITV network to call for redundancies, with Tyne Tees recently announcing 110 compulsory redundancies. TVS Entertainment has also dismissed 100 employees, while Central Television shed 467 jobs late last year. Thames Television has made 300 employees redundant.

Another 40 jobs have been lost at the Plymouth-based

Secretaries are 'better off outside London'

By BILL FROST

A TOP secretary in London earning more than £15,000 a year has less disposable income than her counterpart in Staffordshire on a salary of £8,670. In addition, the Midlands secretary is more likely to enjoy a better quality of life than someone doing a similar job in London, according to a survey by the pay and benefits monitoring group, Reward.

The survey also shows that the recession has forced companies to cut secretaries' bonuses and overtime. It says that the downward trend in such payments is likely to continue for much of the year. According to Reward, pay increases will fall significantly in coming months. Bill Coudrey, managing director

of the company, said yesterday: "We have strong indications that the April wage round will see much lower deals struck than those agreed in the public sector earlier this month, which averaged between 9 and 10 per cent."

The highest salaries for senior secretaries are to be found in London and the South-East: anything between £11,000 and £15,000. The lowest wages are paid in the north Midlands and South Wales: £8,670-£9,677.

"These figures must be seen in perspective, though. Your money buys you much more in Staffordshire than in London and the Home Counties," Mr Coudrey said.

The survey shows that trained assembly line workers in search of the best wages should look no further than the Grampian region, where the hourly rate is £4.93. By comparison, such semi-skilled workers are paid only £3.41 in Northern Ireland.

Reward's bi-annual report is based on information from over 1,100 UK companies.

Clerical and Operative Rewards (Reward Regional Surveys, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent CT 19 5EE)

Miner in lift test is awarded £19,000

A miner thrown around "like a pea in a referee's whistle" when mechanics tested a pit-shaft lift while he was inside it was awarded more than £19,000 in damages yesterday.

In a High Court hearing in Nottingham, Mr Justice Rothery told Reginald Barham, aged 54, of Birmingham, Derbyshire, that his 40-minute ordeal had been worse than Zebrugge. Mr Barham was shot up and down the 580-metre shaft at Markham Colliery, near Chesterfield, as testers ran checks on what they thought was an empty cage.

The lift was allowed to free-fall at more than 30mph in darkness, and the judge said in awarding the damages against British Coal: "We can all think we are going to die when we see a car coming for us, but it is over in seconds. This chap thought he was going to die for about 40 minutes. It is probably the most terrifying case I have ever encountered."

British Coal, who admitted liability, contested the damages. Mr Barham, a miner for 30 years, has not worked since taking voluntary redundancy a year after the 1986 incident.

Silent tribute

A minute's silence was observed yesterday when the enquiry into the Lockerbie air disaster, in which 270 people were killed, ended after 61 days of evidence and legal submissions. Sheriff Principal John Mowat, QC, will deliver his findings in writing within the next few weeks. During the enquiry 131 witnesses gave evidence.

IRA air attack

The army said yesterday that one of its Lynx helicopters made a forced landing in South Armagh after being shot at apparently by at least two machine-guns. The incident took place at about 3.30pm over Crossmaglen. None of the three crew were injured and the extent of damage to the helicopter is unknown. Police later found a number of spent cartridges near St Joseph's school at Crossmaglen.

Exhaust test

Carbon dioxide emission checks will be incorporated into the annual MOT test from November, Christopher Chope, minister for roads, announced yesterday. The new checks, which will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by requiring motorists to keep their car engines properly tuned, should result in marginal environmental improvements and fuel savings, he said.

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Reshaped LSE aimed at leading Europe

By JOHN O'LEARY
HIGHER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE most radical restructuring attempted in a British university has been proposed at the London School of Economics. Plans include a separate graduate school and two intakes of undergraduates in a teaching year extended to 30 weeks.

John Ashworth, the school's new director, has outlined his

proposals in an address to staff. The governors, who have launched a development plan to culminate in the LSE's centenary in 1995, will discuss the scheme next month.

Dr Ashworth said that fundamental change was necessary to preserve the LSE's position as an elite institution. The school's overcrowded and old-fashioned facilities and the high cost of studying in London made it increasingly

difficult to sustain its reputation at home and abroad.

The changes are designed to make the school Europe's leading source of research in the social sciences and offer a four-year undergraduate course with an emphasis on information technology and languages. "Such a curriculum would, in my view, be a suitable preparation for that cadre of skilled administrators, politicians and man-

agers who will be running the European state in 2020," Dr Ashworth said.

The new graduate school would be housed in the LSE's existing premises, but tens of millions of pounds would be needed to build an undergraduate campus, which might be in the London Docklands. The student population of 4,400 would rise to about 9,000.

An extended academic year

enabling two sections of students to be recruited in each 12 months is intended to raise the school's productivity sufficiently to attract government funding. Dr Ashworth said that without such a gesture "there is no sign at present that the government would even consider giving us any capital sum."

Dr Ashworth carried out a similarly far-reaching reorganisation at Salford university in the early 1980s to cope with cuts in government funding. He emphasised that the LSE was in no immediate financial danger but said that change was necessary to stave off a gradual decline into mediocrity.

Initial staff reaction was generally apprehensive about the reorganisation of the academic year.

□ Winning a university place became slightly easier last year, the Universities Central Council on Admissions reported yesterday. Half of the 220,800 applicants were accepted. The highest success rate was among British students who applied early. The 10 per cent of applicants who failed to meet council's December deadline were much less likely to secure a place, while only 40 per cent of overseas candidates were accepted.

Inspector denies fall in school standards

THE head of the schools inspectorate yesterday launched a counter-attack against claims that educational standards are falling.

He admitted, however, that 30 per cent of work in primary and secondary schools remains unsatisfactory (John O'Leary writes).

Eric Bolton, introducing his last annual report as senior chief inspector of schools, said: "There is no evidence of a general decline in standards across the board. There are, of course, things that are not as good as they need to be, but there are very many things that are better." The report says standards are not as good as they could be,

nor high enough to meet individual or national needs.

About 70 per cent of schools inspected during 1989-90 were satisfactory or better, the same proportion as last year, when Mr Bolton concluded that one in three schoolchildren was "getting a raw deal". He said yesterday he continued to hold that view.

Among the shortcomings highlighted in the report are serious teacher shortages in parts of London, poor teaching in 30 per cent of primary and 28 per cent of secondary schools, and an insufficiently demanding curriculum for two-thirds of older primary pupils. Accommodation also

needed to be improved in 70 per cent of the schools.

Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, said that the report offered encouragement on the health of the education service. "It is improving, but it must do better."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said that teachers could take pleasure from the report, which showed that their efforts were paying off against all the odds. Jack Straw, Labour's chief education spokesman, said that the shortcomings in teacher supply and school accommodation demonstrated the bankruptcy of Conservative education policy.



Bolton: "Things not as good as they need to be"

Vagrant held Gemma, 7, for 56 hours in 'wicked and terrifying' ordeal

Kidnapper of caravan girl is sent to Broadmoor

By MICHAEL HOSNELL

THE man who snatched schoolgirl Gemma Lawrence through the open window of a seaside holiday caravan last summer and held her captive for 56 hours was yesterday sent to Broadmoor without time limit.

Mr Justice Auld, sentencing Paul Burton, aged 24, at Winchester crown court, described him as a very dangerous man who had committed "wicked and terrifying" offences. Burton, a vagrant who had told police he should be regarded as a pervert after indulging in schoolgirl sexual fantasies, admitted kidnapping Gemma, aged seven, falsely imprisoning her, indecently assaulting her, escaping from police custody and another serious charge involving the girl.

He also admitted robbery, indecently assaulting a girl aged eight, and asked for 83 other offences to be considered.

Gemma was snatched early on August 11 from the caravan rented by her parents the day after the family arrived for a holiday at West Bay near Bridport, Dorset. Her disappearance sparked a search over 20 square miles by 600 people including holiday-makers, troops and 200 police. Her ordeal ended when Burton surrendered to police who discovered her in a summerhouse at Tree Tops, an unoccupied cliff-top residence which was only 250 yards from the six-berth caravan.

Before kidnapping Gemma, Burton had taken to wandering around caravan parks reaching into caravans and touching young girls in a state of nine incidents. Burton snatched Gemma as she lay



Broadmoor sentence: Paul Burton arriving at Winchester crown court to hear the verdict on his offences

sleeping, pulled her through the window, and took her back to the house which he entered by climbing a drainpipe with her on his back. He later took her to the summerhouse in which was a small concealed cupboard where he assaulted her.

Jeremy Gibbons, for Burton, said medical reports showed Burton was very ill and had been beset by voices and delusions. The judge was satisfied Burton was suffering from schizophrenia and it was appropriate he should be detained in hospital under the terms of the Mental Health Act.

Making an order under section 41 in respect of all the offences Burton had admitted, the judge said: "It is in my view necessary to protect the public, particularly young girls, from you."

Gemma's parents, Nicholas Lawrence, aged 32, a car mechanic, and Gaynor, aged 29, of Wantage, Oxfordshire, who have two other children, said: "We are so relieved this case is over. We now look forward to a quiet and happy future."

Earlier John Aspinall, for the prosecution, told the court that Burton was asked by police why he had taken Gemma and he replied: "Because I wanted to have someone near me, just so I could cuddle her." The child was fed on a little stew, some form of porridge, pear juice and water during her ordeal.

Margaret Orr, a psychiatrist who has been treating Burton, said he was mentally ill and very dangerous.

Police are convinced Burton and Gemma were not in the summerhouse when they searched it the morning after



Remitted: Gemma with her parents after her kidnap ordeal last August

the kidnap, but they admit they did not know of the "secret" compartment.

Gemma was released after an alert constable found scraps of paper blowing in the wind in a gutter 45ft from Tree Tops.

There was nothing to link them to Gemma, though pieced together they revealed scribbled sentences of an explicit sexual nature. A special search team was called to carry out a minute inspection when suddenly the silence was broken by Burton shouting: "Over here - but don't come in. I've got a knife." It was soon established he had three knives and some explosive distress flares.

Inspector Ted Ryan, a trained negotiator, talked to Burton through the summerhouse window and after 45 minutes he released her before giving himself up. Since her ordeal Gemma has remained closely by the side of her parents, rarely alluding to the kidnap incident, and referring to Burton as "that man".

Burton, whose parents separated when he was eight and lost touch with his family, left Falmer comprehensive school in Brighton at 16 with no qualifications and drifted from squat to squat, collecting eight convictions for minor theft and damage.

Three days after his arrest he escaped from Weymouth police station for six minutes before being recaptured.

Oxford to challenge for 'green' study lead

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

OXFORD university today steps boldly into the environmental field with the high-profile launch of a new department to co-ordinate all its "green" research. Its backers hope that it will enable the university to become a world centre of excellence in environmental matters.

More than £2 million has been raised for the Environmental Change Unit, which is intended to focus on specific environmental problems. Oxford's strengths in such disciplines as tropical forestry and climate change, and put them at the service of academia, government and business.

The unit will be unveiled today by a trio of Oxonians eminent in these fields: Sir Richard Southwood, FRSE, the professor of zoology and vice-chancellor; Sir Crispin Tickell, former British ambassador to the UN and now Warden of Green College; and Tony Cleaver, honorary fellow of Trinity and chairman of IBM UK, whose computer company is providing £350,000 in initial funding.

IBM will fund for five years the post of director of the unit, shortly to be announced. The unit will carry out contract research for outside organisations and teach an MSc course in environmental change and management. It is a joint venture between the university's geography, zoology and forestry departments.

Enquiry by police into unrecorded rape cases

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND Yard has begun an investigation into why 38 per cent of rape allegations made to London police last year were not pursued and officially recorded as crimes, according to 1990 crime figures released yesterday. Initial research suggests that some of the 600 rape allegations were withdrawn, could not be substantiated or were untrue.

In a sample of 115 rape allegations which were dropped it was found that 28 per cent were withdrawn or that the victim admitted that they were untrue. In a quarter of the allegations there was no evidence to substantiate the cases and in 26 per cent there was evidence of falsehood, the victim disappeared, refused to substantiate the allegation or the assault was by a husband.

Commander Richard Monk, head of the Yard's community relations department, said yesterday that the police did not want victims to be deterred from coming forward. In some cases a rape would have been alleged but the incident might have been an indecent assault.

The rape figure is part of a total of 114,000 allegations of crime which were not recorded last year.

Women Against Rape said last night that there was evidence that police were still insensitive to the problems of women. Complaints might be withdrawn because the victims felt police could not protect them.

Credit card warning after £1,500 burst pipe charge

By RAY CLANCY

PLUMBERS who try to charge extortionate call-out fees and excessive prices for mending burst pipes should be reported to trading standards authorities, householders were advised yesterday.

Too many people panicked when water poured from a thawing burst pipe and accepted the first price quoted, the Institute of Plumbing said.

Banks and credit card companies also asked people not

to panic after Barclaycard suspended payment in the case of a woman who was charged £1,500 to have a burst pipe repaired. Maria Diamond, a hospital secretary, of Hainault, Essex, signed a blank credit card form after being told by a plumber from Aqua Master, a local firm, that he did not know what the charge would be. She was told the next day.

Barclaycard is investigating to see if there has been a breach of the Consumer Credit Act. "Miss Diamond seems to have been charged an excessive amount for the services rendered," a spokeswoman said.

However she warned customers never to sign a blank form. "Once the voucher has been signed the cardholder has agreed to pay for the goods or services and the transaction is legally binding," she said. She also gave a warning against giving card numbers over the telephone. "Only a very small number of organisations such as hotels and car hire firms have arrangements with the banks to accept numbers over the telephone."

Access gave similar warnings. "If you think a

payment is excessive then do not use your credit card because the charge cannot be stopped," a spokesman said.

Miss Diamond, who contacted Aqua Master because it had the largest advertisement in her Thomson directory, has now asked the firm for a breakdown of the cost. "They must know people are not always thinking straight when water is pouring down around them," she said.

The Institute of Plumbing, a registered charity which promotes better standards, cannot fine the 12,000 members on its register but can strike them off for bringing the institute into disrepute. It advises people to use a registered plumber.

Its register shows that one Aqua Master plumber used to be registered but was struck off.

"The general thinking is that if someone is charged an excessive amount that can be seen as bringing the institute into disrepute," Kevin Wellman, the institute's technical manager, said.

Aqua Master could not be contacted yesterday.

Leading article, page 15

Homeless abandon shelters for streets

By JILL SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

HOMELESS people are abandoning emergency shelters provided by the government during the cold spell, to go back to the "anonymity" of London's pavements.

The environment department said that many of the shelters were not full even though only 700 places have been provided for an estimated 1000 homeless in central London. On some nights as many as 200 emergency places had not been taken up.

"People are going back onto the streets because they like it, but we would try to prevent them from doing so," a department spokesman said. Some resented the rules and regulations of living in hostels.

"The same people then complain that their things have been stolen. Unless there are some rules the system will fall to pieces," the spokesman said. Others were afraid of revealing their identity in case they could be traced by families.

The Salvation Army said it had spotted several people who had gone into shelters last Friday on the streets again. Keith Christian, from the organisation, said as many as 80 per cent of the homeless in London were sleeping rough out of choice. Some had refused to fill in housing benefit forms because it would reveal their identity. "A lot of people like the anonymity of the streets," he said.

Those sleeping out were generally well fed. Mr Christian said 50 organisations were providing free or cheap food, 24 hours a day to areas such as Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Women's Royal Voluntary Service was also providing clothing.

Meanwhile an increase in hypothermia has been reported in some hospitals, while others are treating carbon monoxide poisoning from paraffin heaters and serious burns where people have got too near to heaters.

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A deadly sleep

Deep sleep treatment is the benign-sounding name for a process that led to the deaths of 24 patients in a Sydney psychiatric hospital. William Hobson investigates a bizarre tragedy

The empty quarters

Peter Stothard finds plenty of elbow room in Washington, as fear of terrorism keeps Americans away from the capital's hotels and tourist attractions

Right on to that

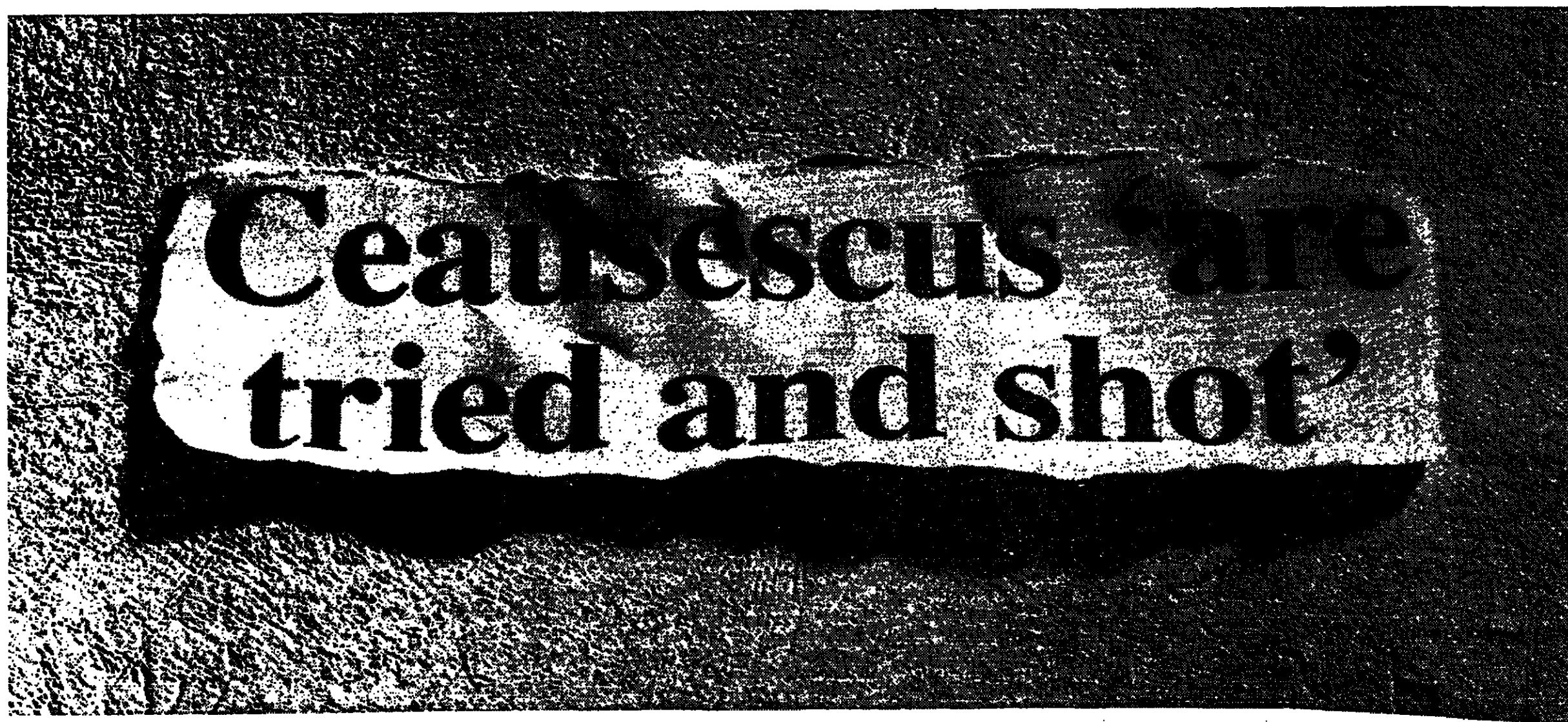
Ben Elton, about to become a director, is too busy being successful to be ambitious, he tells Sean French

Geometry shapes up

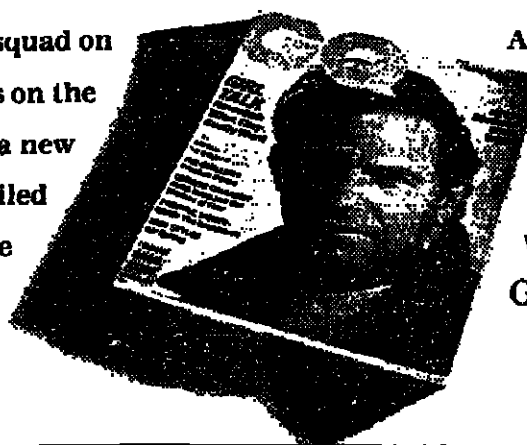
Liz Smith on clothes influenced by Sonia Delaunay's geometric and colourful designs

Saturday's Times: place an order with your newsagent today

IN 1989, TWENTY THREE MILLION ROMANIANS GOT THE SAME CHRISTMAS PRESENT.



Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife were shot by a firing squad on Christmas Day, 1989. What happened during their four days on the run? Who sheltered them? Were they really only puppets of a new Communist regime? In this month's GQ, you can read a detailed account of what it was like to be a dictator who had absolute power one day and just a name in a history book the next.



Also, Prost versus Senna, the duel that has spilled over from the race track to their private lives. Who's getting rich in Hong Kong these days and how they're, literally, getting away with it. And there's a profile of actor/director Kevin Costner whose new film 'Dances with Wolves' looks set to sweep the Oscars this year.

GQ. The men's magazine with an IQ. March issue out now.

A Condé Nast Publication

Food chief angers farmers with attack on marketing skills

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE chairman of a leading British food company angered farmers yesterday by claiming that his firm has to buy much of its beef from Brazil and Argentina because British producers cannot guarantee quality and continuity of supply at competitive prices.

Allen Price, chairman of Birds Eye Walls, told members of the National Farmers' Union at Kensington, west London, that farmers would have to become much more involved in marketing and packaging their products if they were to meet the increasingly stringent demands of supermarkets and food manufacturers.

Mr Price, whose company has an annual turnover of more than £50 million, was accused of humbug by Howard Benbow, a Shropshire pig farmer, who said it was absurd to buy beef from South America when better-quality European meat was accumulating in EC stockpiles.

"The real reason he buys beef from Brazil, where they are cutting down the rainforest, is because it is cheaper," he said.

The exchange came during a debate on the influence of the big supermarkets. Many farmers feel that the retail chains use their near-monopoly power unfairly to hold down the price to the primary producer so that they can boost their profits. The nine biggest supermarket chains command 72 per cent of the

Blackmail claim over subsidy cuts

BRITISH and other European Community farmers could face sharp cuts in their price subsidies and loss of income without compensation if member states do not accept the European Commission's proposals for reform of the common agricultural policy (Michael Hornsby writes).

"It looks like blackmail," a senior official of the National Farmers' Union said. "It appears that the commission is trying to swing other member states behind its reform proposals by threatening them with something worse."

The threat has emerged in a leaked confidential memorandum prepared by commission officials for Raymond MacSharry, the European agriculture commissioner. It suggests that unless the reforms are accepted in something like their present form, emergency action will be needed to prevent large budget deficits.

EC agriculture expenditure, which consumes 60 per cent of the community budget, is expected to increase by £5,530 million in 1991 and a further £2,800 million in 1992. That is due to the cost of storing and disposing of mounting surpluses of cereals, beef, butter and other products and of integrating the former German Democratic Republic into the CAP.

That, in turn, means that the EC is likely this year to exceed by as much as £700 million the budget limit for agricultural spending agreed by heads of government in February 1988. In 1992, the budget limit overrun is expected to amount to £1,400 million, according to the



MacSharry: plan to offer grants to small farmers

and milk production quotas this year, which "could generate the necessary savings but would probably not leave a sufficient margin for any significant compensation".

As they stand, Mr MacSharry's proposals would cut price subsidies but offer compensation in the form of direct grants intended for small farmers, of which there are relatively fewer in Britain than anywhere else in the community. Compulsory production restraints would be imposed on big dairy and cereals farmers.



Going soon: Lowdham railway station in Nottinghamshire, one of three disused stations being auctioned in Birmingham this afternoon by the British Rail Property Board (John Young writes). The other two are at Moira, Leicestershire, and Spondon, on the outskirts of Derby. They are among 21 stations in the Midlands and North Wales being offered for sale. Several are listed as of historic or architectural interest. Although the buildings are disused, the lines are still in operation, and BR is retaining the freeholds in case the sites are needed in the future.

Foetal test may find gene defect

By THOMSON PRENTICE MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

FRAGILE X syndrome, the most common form of inherited mental retardation, could be detected in pregnancy as a result of research published today.

The untreatable syndrome, affecting one in 1,500 males, is so called because the genetic defects that cause it lie on a part of the X chromosome that is prone to breakage. About one in 1,000 females carry the defect and can pass it on to their children. Boys are much more likely to be retarded than girls, with the defect leading to mental handicap, behavioural abnormalities and epilepsy.

French scientists report in *Nature* that they have discovered genetic features of the disease that could be used to trace its onset in the foetus. In studies of seven Fragile X families, including grandparents, parents and children, they found identical chemical modifications in the fragile region of the chromosome.

Dr Jean-Louis Mandel and colleagues at a molecular genetics laboratory in Strasbourg say the clues might help to explain the variable nature and severity of symptoms. Their findings could lead to improved diagnosis of the syndrome in mentally retarded males and to symptoms being detected in the unborn child.

Move to block ordination of remarried divorcees fails

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE Court of Appeal yesterday rejected a challenge to the two archbishops of the Church of England over plans to allow the ordination of remarried divorcees.

The court dismissed an appeal by four members of the General Synod seeking to overturn legislation passed in 1987. The four now have 30 days in which to seek leave from the law lords to appeal to the House of Lords. The action affects about 240 would-be ordinands who are divorced and remarried.

If the four synod members, who already face costs of tens of thousands of pounds, decide not to appeal, some of the divorcees could be ordained before the end of the year if they obtain special leave from an archbishop. If leave to appeal is not granted, the church will seek a royal licence for the legislation which will then be officially proclaimed by the synod when it meets in York in July.

The four who brought the action are Canon Roy Porter, former professor of theology at Exeter university; Margaret Brown, of Mayfield, East Sussex; Michael Coombs, of Bourne, Dorset, and Trevor Stevenson, of Crowborough, East Sussex. They were ordered to pay costs.

Lords Justices Dillon, Leggatt and Nolan refused them leave to appeal to the House of Lords, but they can still apply direct to the law lords. Hubert Brown, who attended court on behalf of his wife Margaret, said: "We brought the case for the Church of England and very many people in the church backed us and wanted us to win. A large section in the church, including more than one third of the General Synod's House of Laity, are entirely against the ordination of divorced remarried people because of Our Lord's teaching that remarriage after divorce is adultery."

"The Church of England is getting more and more lax on that. It already allows clergy who remarry after divorce to remain in holy orders and it will now actually admit them at the start. It's the thin end of a very thick wedge."

Mr Brown said consideration would now be given to a House of Lords appeal. The costs already incurred were expected to be considerable, but enough backers had been found to pay the bill.

Giving judgment, Lord Justice Dillon said the question was whether the four had an arguable case that a special two-thirds majority of each of the three houses of the General Synod was required to pass the new canon. The canon had received a simple majority of 125 votes to 77 and not a two-thirds majority in the house of laity in 1987. It was passed by 139 votes to 65 in the house of clergy.

The judges dismissed the argument that the new canon fell under the terms of the church's 1974 Worship and Doctrine Measure, which requires any new canon deemed to interfere with the rubrics of the church in *The Book of Common Prayer* to obtain a two-thirds majority. The judges upheld the case put forward on behalf of the Archbishops, Dr Robert Runcie and Dr John Habgood, as joint presidents of the General Synod, that the new canon fell entirely within the terms of the Clergy Ordination Measure 1990 which was passed by a simple majority, proceeded through Parliament and received the Royal Assent last February.

□ A leading Methodist minister, the Rev Brian Duckworth, general secretary of the Methodist division of social responsibility, last night attacked possible proposals for a national lottery. He said the lottery, to benefit sport, the arts and the environment, would "make poor families poorer".

Former envoy is cleared of murder

A jury at the Central Criminal Court took just two minutes yesterday to clear the former Sierra Leone ambassador to Britain of the murder or manslaughter of a drunk.

Donald George, aged 59, a barrister from Edgware, north-west London, had been accused of killing Michael O'Reilly, a building worker aged 32, who fell and fractured his skull after being reprimanded for urinating in the doorway of a shop in Edgware run by Mr George's daughter.

Tight security for Ellis case

Strict security was in force at Thames magistrates' court, east London, yesterday when committal proceedings began against Desmond Ellis the first man extradited from Dublin under new legislation.

Mr Ellis, aged 38, from Dublin, is accused of conspiring with others to cause an explosion likely to endanger life on or between January 1981 and October 1983 and with possessing explosives. Proceedings continue today.

Killer jailed

Edward Ferncombe, aged 18, from Clonsilla, Dublin, was jailed for nine years for manslaughter yesterday by the Central Criminal Court in Dublin. He admitted stabbing Gale Critchfield, aged 20, a Mormon missionary from Utah, during an attempted mugging.

Raider sentenced

A building society branch in Finsbury Park, north London, has been raided at gunpoint seven times in just over a year, the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday. Brian Nicholas, aged 26, of Tottenham, north London, who stole £1,100 from the Nationwide Anglia in November, was jailed for eight years. He pleaded not guilty.

Two face trial

Alun Llwyd, aged 21, of Cardiff, chairman of the Welsh Language Society, and Branwen Nicholas, aged 21, one of its north Wales organisers, of Tal-y-bont, near Bangor, Gwynedd, were yesterday sent for trial accused of causing £17,591 of damage to government offices at Rhos-on-Sea, Cwyd.

On the move

A bungalow in North Cockerington, Lincolnshire, which has been hit by cars three times in 15 months is to be rebuilt further from the road bend that is causing the trouble.

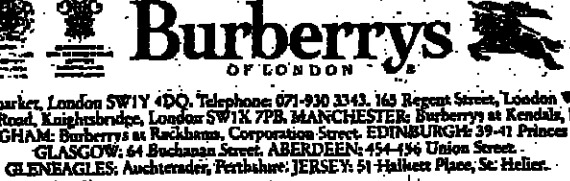
Helping hands

Parents of pupils at Park Junior school in Llay, near Wrexham, Cwyd, are being asked to help with decorating so that the school, which manages its own budget, can spend more on equipment.

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Elephants 'at risk if ivory trade resumes'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE SURVIVAL of the African elephant would again be at risk if its status under international conventions were changed, Richard Leakey, director of the Kenya Wildlife Service said yesterday.

On a visit to London, Dr Leakey expressed his alarm at moves by some countries to reduce elephant protection by redesignating it in a different category under the convention on the international trade in endangered species. Such a change would enable the trade in ivory from at least some elephants to resume.

If that happens, he said, the result would be deeply damaging, with poaching starting up again and the success of the ivory ban undermined. Over the past two years ivory poaching in east Africa had declined, and Kenya's elephant herds were increasing, he said.

All that would be at risk if at the next meeting of the convention, in Kyoto, Japan, in March 1992, pressure from southern African countries succeeded in getting the African elephant moved from appendix 1 to appendix 2 of the convention, he said. He appealed to governments and to conservation bodies to make their position on the issue clear.

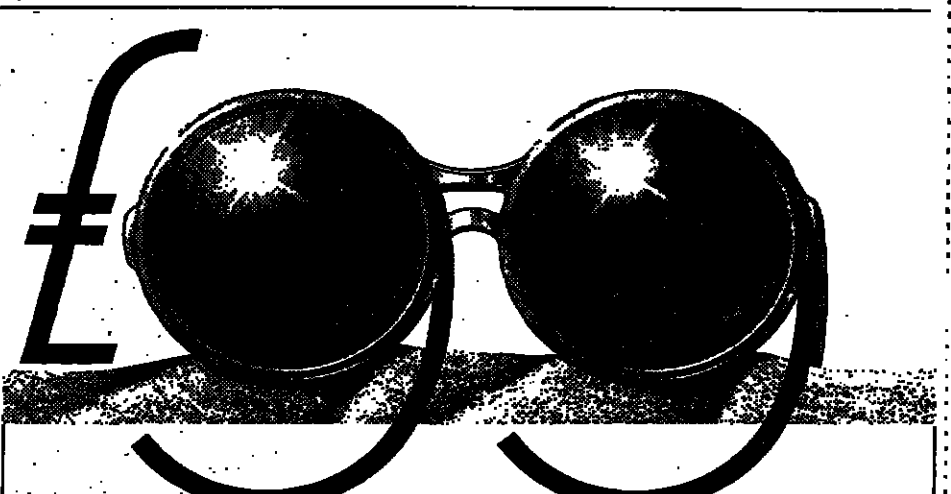
Behind Dr Leakey's remarks lies a sharp division of opinion between those who believe in a total ban on the trading of ivory, and those who think that the elephant's future may be more secure if it can be shown to be of economic value to local people. Those in favour of resuming a limited ivory trade include Zimbabwe and other southern African countries, but they will require the votes of western nations if they are to change the rules.

Dr Leakey insisted that the ban had worked: "The price of ivory has fallen dramatically, the bottom has dropped out of the Far East ivory markets and ivory carving factories in Hong Kong and China have been forced to close."

Those who argue in favour of a limited return to ivory trading say that DNA fingerprinting methods make it possible to identify ivory from different elephant populations, enabling some to be protected while others are culled.



Leakey: change in status will damage elephants



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Transport secretary determined to steer clear of ideology

By ROBIN OAKLEY
POLITICAL EDITOR



Malcolm Rifkind

AS AN Edinburgh MP Malcolm Rifkind has been accustomed to life on British Rail sleepers to and from his constituency. After mentioning this at his first press conference, the new transport secretary was amused to see headlines the next day: "Transport minister is rail champion".

He dismisses the road versus rail debate as one of extreme superficiality and clearly brings an open mind to his new job. The rhetoric of the transport debate in recent years, he says, has produced more heat than light. His is a non-ideological approach.

Does that mean that the privatisation of British Rail has slipped off the agenda? No. But it will not be done for purely ideological reasons. It will not be in this Parliament, Mr Rifkind says. "The question is to what extent we can achieve it in the

next Parliament." He endorses the desire to see British Rail privatised, but adds: "I start with what will be of most assistance to the travelling public. The question of privatisation should not be determined on some abstract theoretical basis, but on whether the travelling public will benefit in terms of quality of service and price."

"I believe that British Rail in the private sector will be likely to be more sensitive to public expectations, to provide a better quality of service and career structure and greater corporate identity."

As for method, he will not be drawn, but he says that the idea of separating track from rolling stock and having just one of them privatised or both run by separate companies is "something that needs to be looked at".

He would like to see an expanding role for the railways,

arguing that there has been a misconception that it has all been downhill since Beeching. In the last five to six years, he points out, 135 stations have been opened or reopened and only 11 closed. Railways are through the period, he believes, when the spread of what he calls the "motor car" led many to choose an alternative means of transport. Now traffic congestion is driving passengers back and rail investment is higher than it has been for 30 years.

The public are entitled to grumble that they have not seen much yet, he agrees. The problem is the time lag between spending decisions and full implementation. But he hands out readily a three-page sheet detailing the practical spending that has been undertaken on rolling stock and facilities.

There is sympathy for the embattled commuters of the Southeast. He says that they have

a better standard of living than those elsewhere but not a better quality of life. "I am conscious of the fact that British Rail is subject to intense competition from road and air services in other parts of the country, but that with commuter services to central London there is little effective competition. British Rail is not a monopoly, but they are very much the dominant provider. That has got to be taken into consideration in terms of quality of service."

Does that mean that he might continue subsidies a little longer than planned for Network South-East to improve that quality of life? The elimination of unnecessary subsidy, Mr Rifkind says, is important. "The question is what is necessary and what is unnecessary."

He sees real hopes of more freight being switched from road to rail, arguing that there are

opportunities here for the private sector. The Channel tunnel, in British Rail's estimation will save 400,000 lorry journeys a year. But he has his department re-examining the entitlement to facility grants to encourage firms to use rail rather than road for their freight when a strong environmental benefit would follow. He believes that the entitlements may have been set too tightly and they may be relaxed.

Further, Mr Rifkind says, two-fifths of the rail wagons running on the railway network are owned by firms other than British Rail, but only one company runs its own locomotives too. He says: "The fact that only one company does that argues that the system does not make it easy or attractive for others to have access to British Rail track. I think that is an area to be explored."

On the roads, he is looking at ways of pricing the environmental

impact of road schemes, not just making subjective decisions about the preservation of natural or architectural sites.

Would he favour toll roads? Struck by the sheer cost of motorway building at £5 million to £10 million a mile, he says: "They can make an important contribution. To meet the requirements we have to look for additional sources of funding."

In tackling the congestion problems of inner cities he is not ruling out road pricing. "I am interested by the idea. But it has never been tried anywhere except Singapore and I am not in a position to say if there might be any relevance for the UK. What is clear is that Mr Rifkind is not going to be apologetic about the huge spending programme on roads over the next three years and that he will be less nervous than his predecessors about acknowledging the integration of transport policy."

Cut in interest rate not to be repeated yet, MPs are told

By JOHN WINDER AND PETER MULLIGAN

ECONOMY

A WARNING that yesterday's cut in interest rates could not be followed by further cuts until they were judged to be sustainable and safe was given by the chancellor during the Commons debate on the autumn statement.

Norman Lamont told MPs that further cuts depended on sterling's position in the exchange-rate mechanism of the European Monetary System, but it would be a mistake to imagine that they were locked into high interest rates indefinitely.

The shadow chancellor, John Smith, said that yesterday's reduction should have been a full percentage point and further reductions would be necessary to avoid even more sharp falls in investment, output and employment.

There were protests from both sides when Mr Lamont opened the debate by saying that the exchange-rate mechanism was not the Pandora's box from which the downturn in the economy had sprung.

The chancellor also caused some surprise among MPs with a sharp reference to Sir Alan Walters and others who had written to *The Times* that morning calling for immediate interest rate cuts.

MPs, he said, would be very concerned about the recession and interest rates, but reduction of inflation must remain the overriding objective of government policy. "There can be no letting up on that goal. Low inflation is the essential basis for all our success in the future: that is why it is worth striving for."

After the ravages of the

reversed, a point that seems to have escaped the notice of some learned professors who write letters to *The Times*.

Recessions always ended, and the present one was no exception. They could already discern some forces that would lead to recovery, he said, and that was why most independent forecasters expected a return to growth later this year.

The present downturn came after a cumulative growth in output of 28 per cent between 1981 and 1989, much extra output to set against a fall at present predicted by some independent forecasters to be about 1 per cent.

"A reversal of that magnitude does not justify exaggerated and irresponsible talk of a depression."

He said that a continued rise in unemployment could be expected even after the recovery in output had begun. The recovery would begin when decisive progress had been made against inflation.

The onset of inflation had started to make headlines about the time Britain joined the ERM and that had prompted many to blame recession on the entry, but it was not the source of present problems. The downturn was the result of excessive demand and borrowing in 1987 and 1988.

The ERM and Britain's position in it were central to the government's overall strategy.

John Smith described Mr Lamont's speech as defensive and gloomy and he observed that there had been no joy on the faces of Tory MPs as they had listened. He said that he identified a sense of gloom and "a sense of sickening reality as their constituents remind them of the consequences of government economic policy."

Condemning the Tories' "boom and bust" record, he said that Conservative MPs were beginning to understand that the government was responsible for the level of inflation.

The case for interest rate reductions was overwhelming, he said. Even a half point cut was better than none, but it was too little and too late. There should have been a cut before the end of last year and, in its absence, a cut of a full point now.

Alan Walters, page 14

The disease that's killing me hurts most on February 14th.

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MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE



Elevated arts: Lord Palmbo (centre), formerly Peter Palmbo, arts council chairman, with his sponsors, Lord McAlpine of West Green (left) and Lord Miascon, before taking his seat in the House of Lords

Strong backing for chancellor

By ROBERT MORGAN

ECONOMY

THE chancellor's stance against inflation was given strong backing during yesterday's debate by Terence Higgins, chairman of the Treasury select committee.

Mr Higgins, Conservative MP for Worthing and former Treasury minister, said that the recession had come about because of the need to deal with the overheating of the economy stemming from the action taken after the Stock Exchange crash in October 1987. One thing that had emerged was that if John Smith, the shadow chancellor, had had his way that overheating would have been worse.

Having studied the autumn statement, the Treasury committee had concluded that the recession was likely to be deeper and longer than the Treasury had predicted. The committee had come to the conclusion that the Treasury always underestimated the turning point in the economic cycle and its errors got bigger in each successive cycle.

Its latest forecast on inflation, however, seemed to be more accurate and the committee believed that the target of 5.5 per cent to be achieved

by the end of the year would be correct.

He said that the recession this time differed from that in 1981 in that the corporate sector was much more in debt and the banks were not so likely to offer credit. In 1981, they had been willing to help companies in temporary difficulties but that had promising futures.

With interest rates now being used to maintain the value of sterling, greater emphasis had to be put on fiscal policy for stimulating the domestic economy. He suggested that government spending could be relaxed on such things as hospital building.

He argued that regional hospital chairmen were hanging on to surplus land waiting for a higher price. The government should allow them to go ahead with building in the knowledge that the money spent would be recouped in a couple of years from the sale of land. That sort of policy would also stimulate the building industry.

Ministers set up Brussels 'radar'

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

EC COMMISSION

MINISTERS have set up an early warning system to alert themselves to unwelcome messages from Brussels and to stop the commission catching them unawares and slipping through directives judged to conflict with British interests.

Ministers in key departments are understood to have formed themselves into small informal teams to keep a close eye on dealings between their civil servants and their counterparts in other European Community states.

Much EC business begins in working parties of officials meeting in Brussels and some ministers have become concerned that their civil servants are failing to drive a sufficiently hard bargain.

One minister said: "They would sell you down the river before breakfast. We can now see a Brussels Scud from miles away."

The Treasury, the trade and industry department and the agriculture ministry are said to be among the departments most closely scrutinising the positions adopted by British civil servants in EC negotiations.

The ministers involved are

said to be exercising particular vigilance over apparently minor or technical matters that might otherwise go through on the nod.

The unofficial early warning system is intended to strengthen ministerial scrutiny of the commission. It is in addition to the cabinet committees that monitor the most important items on the EC agenda and the inter-departmental ministerial group on Europe chaired by Tristan Garel-Jones, a middle-ranking Foreign Office minister.

Running in parallel with that ministerial group is an inter-departmental group of civil servants known as EQO, the European questions of officials committee, which meets at the Cabinet Office and helps to co-ordinate the British input into EC policy-making. The early warning system is also intended to monitor the flow of paper from the Brussels working parties to the EQO committee and to stiffen policy positions where necessary.

Poor get surplus food

The government is asking charities and similar bodies again to help in the distribution of surplus food and butter held in EC intervention. David Curry, a junior agriculture minister, told MPs.

In a written reply, he said that the European Commission had decided to continue with the distribution of surplus food and, although the government regards the scheme as inefficient, it does not wish to deprive the poorest people of some help.

Beaches case unlikely

The European Commission is now unlikely to take Britain to the European Court over the state of its beaches, David Trappier, the environment minister, said in a written reply. The government is having talks with the commission on steps being taken to improve bathing waters.

Adoptions

Since December 1989, 149 Romanian children have been allowed to come to Britain to be adopted by British couples. Peter Lloyd, a Home Office minister, said in a written reply. Forty-two applications, most made since last December, are outstanding.

Ribble Valley

Voting in the Ribble Valley by-election will take place on March 7. It was caused by the move to the Lords of David Waddington, the former home secretary, who had a majority of 19,528 in the 1987 general election. There are already 11 candidates.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Northern Ireland; prime minister. Debates on Liberal Democrat motions on farming and on fishing. Lords (3): Debate on EC shipping measures.

Public spending reports

Heseltine's green cash

By RICHARD FORD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SPENDING on initiatives to improve the countryside and protect many of Britain's famous buildings and monuments is to increase over the next three years as Michael Heseltine's environment department tries to highlight its green credentials.

Government spending on the environment is estimated to rise from £28.7 billion in 1990-1 to £33.4 billion in 1993-4, according to the department's annual report published yesterday. The huge sum includes cash for housing, environmental matters and local government, including money to ameliorate the political damage caused by the poll tax.

The report also showed that the department has launched initiatives to ensure that it is in the vanguard of the moves toward the "greening" of government. A review of the environmental implications of



Heseltine: money goes to buildings and monuments

its present policies has been undertaken and, wherever possible, contractual arrangements ensure that all items used are environmentally friendly.

This week a pilot scheme has been extended to all parts of the department's headquarters in Marham Street,

Westminster, under which separate bins are used for different quality waste paper. All the better quality paper, including most of that used for letters, is collected and sent for recycling.

The report said that the department aimed to cut energy consumption by 15 per cent over the next five years by installing more energy-efficient lighting which over the next few years will involve the replacement of the present lighting at the department's headquarters.

An extra £130 million has been made available for this year to assist the launch of the national countryside initiative, begin the work on a new national forest in the Midlands, improve water quality and help to preserve historic buildings. Spending on heritage will rise from £149 million in 1990-1 to £189 million in 1993-4, with the biggest increase going to the historic buildings and monuments commission.

13% more for the arts

LAST year's game of musical chairs in the arts and libraries office which saw three arts ministers in post did nothing to diminish the arts spending commitment. There is a 13 per cent increase, to £559 million, for the next financial year (Simon Tait writes).

At £217 million, the largest vote goes to dance, drama, literature, music and the visual arts via the Arts Council (£194.2 million), the British Film Institute (£14 million), National Film and Television School (£12.5 million), Crafts Council (£2.75 million) and Business Sponsorship Initiative Scheme (£3.5 million). The share for museums and galleries rises from £197 million to £217 million and there is £132 million for libraries. Of that, all but £5.6 million is for the British Library and its St Pancras scheme. The public lending right scheme is to get £4.75 million.

Foreign Office is £50m over budget

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE Foreign Office estimates that it will spend £942 million this year, about £50 million more than planned because of the additional £10.7 million cost of rehousing Vietnamese boat people, drugs assistance to Latin America, £4.5 million to pay for the Nato summit in London, £1.5 million extra for Eastern Europe and the fall in the value of sterling.

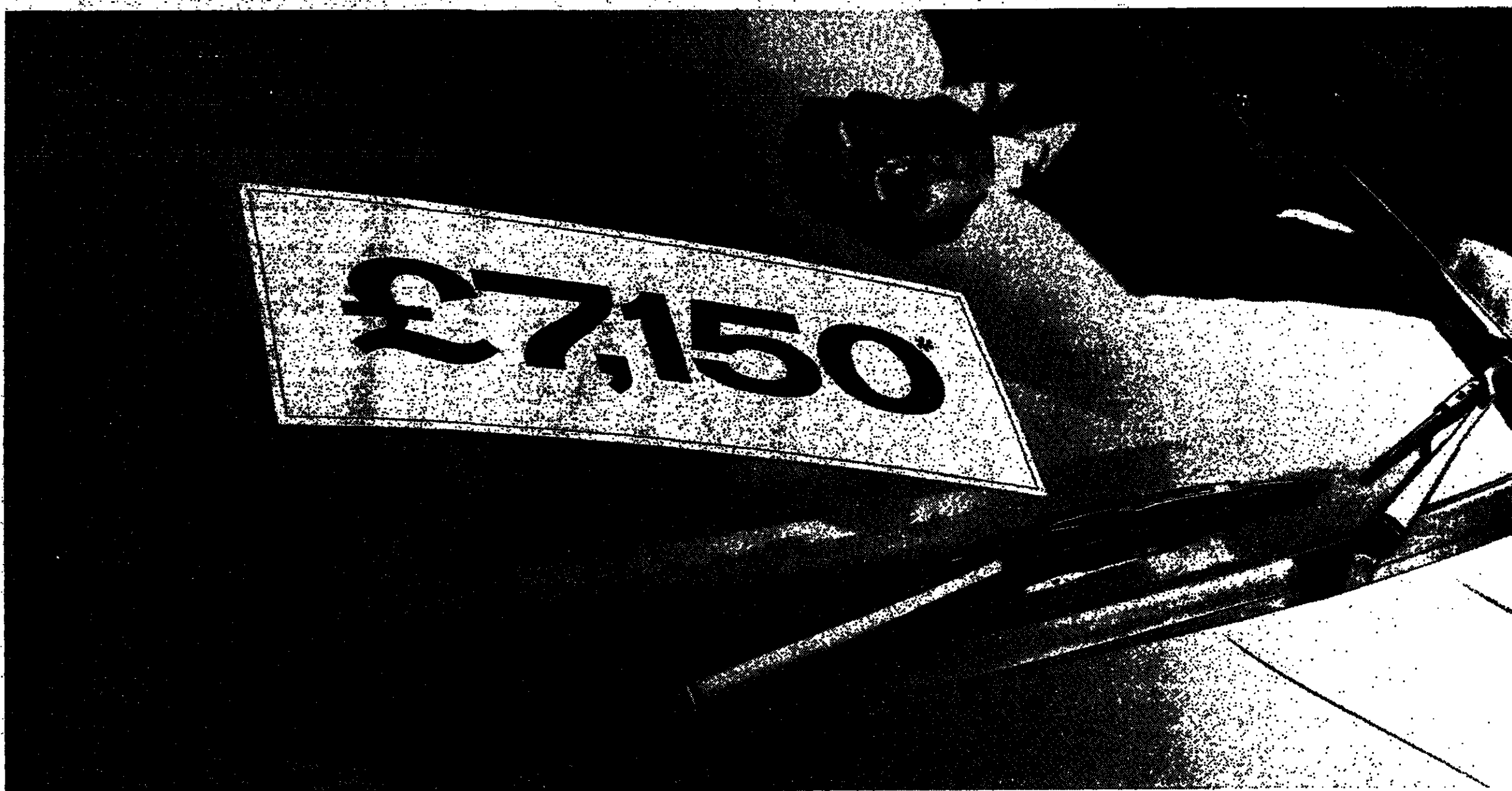
Of the total budget, about £414 million will be spent on the diplomatic service. According to estimates published yesterday, that is due to rise to £467 million next year, and £521 million by 1993. But over the past two years, from 1979 to 1988, the number of diplomats fell by a tenth, though Britain's diplomatic presence increased.

Britain now maintains 42 high commissions in Commonwealth countries, 88 embassies, 10 missions to international organisations,

62 subordinate posts such as consulates, and 5 interest sections or trade offices. A total of 2,710 British staff are serving overseas, with 183 on secondment from other government departments.

It costs on average £72,000 to keep each diplomat abroad: total spending on them amounted to £268.8 million last year. Britain also employs 7,000 locally engaged staff, ranging from senior commercial officers to drivers.

For the first time, the Foreign Office has published an outline of its diplomatic tasks and priorities over the next three years. For example, one objective is "maintaining Nato as an effective defensive alliance". One top priority is "securing the total and unqualified withdrawal from Kuwait". The report lists the means used laconically: "Diplomatic and military action".



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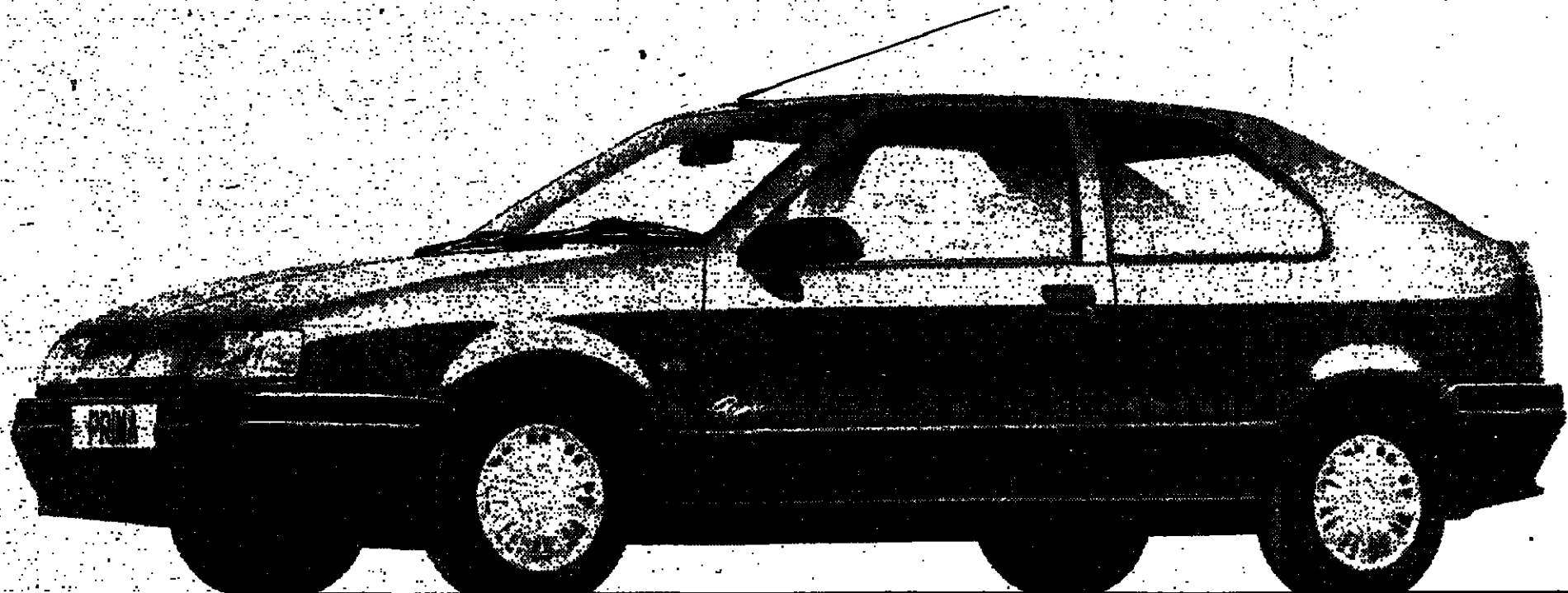
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IRAQI DEFECTIONS

Rising stream of deserters flee bombing

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA

THE number of Iraqi army deserters is increasing significantly, with 24 more surrendering to US Marines between midnight on Monday and 9am on Tuesday morning. In the latest desertion, the men again braved Iraqi minefields to give themselves up. Their surrender brought to more than 100 the number of Iraqis who have crossed over since last Saturday. Between Saturday night and Sunday morning 75 Iraqis had surrendered, the largest number in such a period.

Iraqi concern at the rate of desertions has been demonstrated by a new policy of arresting whole families of men whose names appear on deserters' lists, according to one Iraqi who recently surrendered to the US First Infantry Division. In addition to intimidating relatives, Iraq has set up military execution squads to operate behind the lines against deserters. The main reasons for the desertions, despite Baghdad's clampdown, are the relentless allied bombing of Iraqi positions and food shortages, with army rations said to be down to a sandwich a day.

Describing the latest group of deserters, who crossed over in small groups, Chief Warrant Officer Eric Carlson, a spokesman for the US First Marines at the front line, said: "What they are is line crossers. They are giving themselves up, as opposed to being captured, and that appears to be the trend." Many of the deserters have said that morale was low among the Iraqis manning the front line in Kuwait.

However, allied commanders remain cautious about any mass surrenders despite the dropping of more than five million leaflets giving instructions to Iraqi troops on how to give up. Earlier, ten other Iraqis had surrendered to members of an Egyptian armoured division. The ten, mostly sergeants, claimed that even seasoned veterans were now fleeing President Saddam Hussein's army because of the relentless allied bombing, the food and equipment shortages, and weariness with the four-week-old war.

One of those who surrendered to the Egyptians was Saad Shabi, aged 29. The ten-year veteran of a unit that includes Soviet-built T55 tanks said that he had fought in the war against Iran and had no desire to fight again. "Fighting, fighting, fighting, and for what?" he told his Egyptian captors.

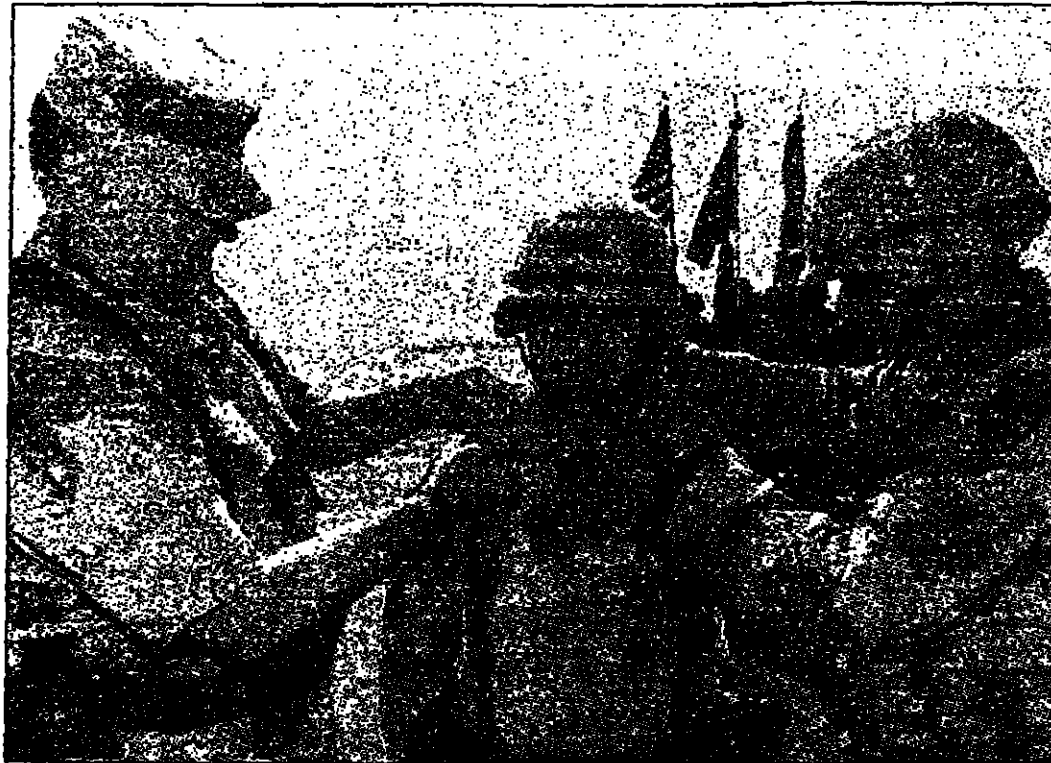
Shabi described how he and seven other soldiers had made their way through a minefield. He claimed that Iraqi mines were visible in the sand to those travelling on foot. He also confirmed that there were large trenches, filled with oil that could be set ablaze to thwart an allied ground assault.

The ten Iraqis, one of whom spoke English and translated for the others, said that most deserters were heading north to their homes in Iraq. They added that desertions were even occurring among the crack Republican Guard, but they gave no figures.

Allied sources said that all claims were being treated with caution. But defence analysts had predicted from the outset of the war that most deserters would probably try to head north towards their homes rather than venture south across the minefields into enemy hands.

One of the more unusual desertions occurred a few days ago when an Iraqi, who claimed to have been forced by his commander to man a forward observation post without his shoes, surrendered to the crew of a US Cobra helicopter while three other Iraqis at the post ran away. "He said a lot of his friends, he could not say how many, had been killed in bombing raids," Captain Michael Bills, the commander of a cavalry troop in the US First Infantry Division, said.

The latest allied figure for deserters and prisoners of war is just over a thousand. But many Western observers believe that this number may be understated because the allies are reluctant to name some of those, who have given themselves up to international organisations like the Red Cross, in case of revenge measures against their families.



Field promotion: Major-General Gas Pagonis, centre, the American logistics commander for Operation Desert Storm, receiving his third star yesterday to become a lieutenant-general from General Norman Schwarzkopf, overall commander of the allied forces in the Gulf, and his son, Captain Gas William Pagonis, during a ceremony in the Saudi Arabian desert. General Schwarzkopf said that the complex logistics and supply problems of the massive military deployment were being solved daily. He added: "The logistical situation is absolutely superb."

MILITARY BRIEFINGS

Plain English wins press battle

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN SAUDI ARABIA

WITH a mix of charm, reasonably straight talking and a willingness to use layman's language, the British military is regarded by journalists of all nationalities to have won the daily briefings battle over their more numerous American counterparts, distrusted for trying too crudely to impose what is referred to here as "the White House spin of the day".

American military spokesmen have been criticised by the 150 journalists regularly attending the expanded series of briefings for using too much jargon and for imparting little real information. Out-of-turn questioners - journalists seeking to penetrate the Pentagon's public relations smoke-screen - are often rudely put down.

A particular star for the dominant United States press corps - a number of them sceptical veterans of Saigon's infamous "five o'clock follies" (the American military has insisted that Riyadh briefings begin at 6pm to avoid any such odious comparison) - has been Air Vice-Marshal Bill Wratten, who gave the first British briefing

after the war began. "We realised afterwards that he did not say much, but he did it with such style that nobody noticed," enthused Deborah Wang, the correspondent for National Public Radio. "He was so articulate and charming that he did not seem much like a military guy."

Wang and many of her American colleagues have praised the British for being more willing than the Americans to trot out their top brass. "Generally, the American briefers talk in single syllables and use more acronyms and jargon. British commanders speak in English," she said.

Lieutenant-General Sir Peter de la Bilière, the commander of the British forces in the Gulf, has successfully shed the instinct for excessive secrecy imbedded by years of running undercover operations as chief of the SAS. While tight-lipped American officers have continued to hum and haw, he was unequivocal: a ground war was now "inevitable", he said last week to the dismay of those in Washington unwilling for such straight talk. "The British are my

favourite," said Serafin, of the popular ABC television network. "They usually have something to say and a particular way of saying it... it may just be a British way of putting things, but they are more likely to say something definite and not couch it in all kinds of qualifications."

During the three daily American briefings the use of military abbreviations is so commonplace that newcomers are recommended to take a crash course before attending. Among the most frequently used acronyms - especially at the morning, off-camera sessions - are KTO (Kuwait Theatre of Operations), TEL (Transporter Erector Launcher for Scuds), EPW (Enemy Prisoner of War, which has replaced POW as far as Iraqis are concerned), KIA (Killed In Action) and the unfortunate LAV (Light Armoured Vehicle).

American briefers have recently added "friendly missile" to the unhappy phrase "friendly fire" which they use for what the army in Northern Ireland has long since described as an "own goal".

TROOP PROTECTION

Britons buckle on the best line in body armour

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S troops are preparing for a land war in the Gulf with ultra-light personal body armour which is claimed to be the finest in the world.

Frontline units which could be facing Iraqi grenade and shell shrapnel are being clothed in layers of ballistic nylon and Kevlar fibres, a material five times stronger than steel. Commanders hope that every one of the 25,000 British troops will have the armour before the land offensive begins. Infantrymen, including the Royal Scots, Royal Fusiliers and Staffords have been kitted out but some combat engineers, artillerymen and members of tank regiments are still waiting.

Although the basic armour is only designed to stop shrapnel, the full protective kit can stop a ricocheting bullet. One young cavalry officer took his armour, wrapped it round a sandbag, and fired a 9mm pistol at it. The bullet penetrated the nylon but merely dented the hard Kevlar plastic.

Only British troops are being issued with nylon and Kevlar armour, which is greatly admired for its light weight and coolness. American troops are believed to have been issued with Kevlar-only armour which is less effective against some shrapnel.

"We are the only country that uses the hybrid system," said Douglas Garland, managing director of RBR (Armour) of southeast London, a company which has supplied about a quarter of the

body armour to the British Army in the Gulf. He said that the British kit, which weighs less than 6lb, is designed to withstand flesh-piercing fragments travelling at more than 1,000 mph.

Several companies, including Dowty Armourshield of Manchester, have supplied the "personal protection equipment" built to the unique specifications of the British defence ministry. The four outer layers of woven nylon, made by ICI, take the impact of the lighter fragments which can explode from a grenade. The 12 plies from a Kevlar, aramide fibres made by Dupont, are built to resist heavier fragments which can explode from grenades or bombs at speeds of 2,200 mph. Mr Garland said that the armour was not designed to stop a direct hit from a bullet, although armour built by the company for the Royal Ulster Constabulary will.

How well troops survive against Iraqi shrapnel will depend as much on luck as on the personal armour. The armour should, in theory, stop half or one in two of the fragments getting through. Medieval knights often sported metal coddies but, despite the availability of Kevlar and nylon modern equivalents, these are not worn by the British army.

Mr Garland said that it was a balance between safety and practicality. "You cannot work if you have something covering these areas. They will flap up and down. Soldiers throw them away."



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AMERICA'S MOOD

TV images of child victims worry the White House

FROM PETER STOTHARD, US EDITOR, IN WASHINGTON

TWO images from the Gulf dominated American television screens yesterday — the burnt babies from the Baghdad bomb shelter and the thick-set figure of the Soviet Union's special Middle Eastern envoy, Yevgeni Primakov. Both brought big worries to the White House as officials wrestled with the rapidly changing problem of the war against President Saddam Hussein.

The CNN news pictures of injured children and dead bodies laid out in a jumble of red-and-white, black-and-white and brown check blankets posed an immediate dilemma. The White House wanted to be cautious about accepting the Iraqi-controlled pictures as presenting the truth. But it was hard to suggest that the pictures of charred children's limbs might be stage-managed without also seeming callous about their content.

In tougher-minded Britain it may be acceptable to say, as Downing Street did, that such an incident was "regrettable but bound to happen sooner or later."

But in America, where officials are ever conscious of the way that single incidents, like the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, can turn the public perception of a war, the reaction has to be less brutal.

The official US position was that the building was a "legitimate military target, an active command-and-control facility which had been on the allied target list

for several weeks. The raid was "well executed and well planned", the military spokesman in Riyadh said. A Saudi spokesman suggested that because no air raid siren had been reported, President Saddam Hussein might have deliberately placed women and children at risk.

In Washington, however, the mood was less confident. White House spokesmen asked reporters not to forget the thousands of civilian casualties suffered during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. There was exasperation at the power of television images from Baghdad to dominate the agenda and renewed complaint in Republican circles about the presence of CNN in the Iraqi capital.

When the US military spokesman in Riyadh was asked if he shared the British sentiments of regret, he said that "if 400 civilians, as reported, were killed, then logic would tell you that of course the American public and coalition soldiers are saddened by this fact". That was seen in Washington as an unfortunate choice of words, but "marine generals are not trained to deal with public relations problems of that difficulty", as one administration source put it.

President Bush has become increasingly impatient in recent days about the successes that Iraq has enjoyed in selling the message that American bombing raids are killing civilians. He has publicly complained that too many people are "buying" the Iraqi line.

One of the chief objects of President Bush's concern is President Gorbachev, who has used the issue of civilian casualties to warn that America is close to exceeding its UN mandate to drive Iraq from Kuwait. On Tuesday night, at the end of one of the most intense days of allied bombing, Baghdad state radio announced that Iraq was "prepared to extend co-operation with the Soviet Union" in order to find a peaceful solution to regional problems.

The White House has long feared that Mr Gorbachev would like to engineer an international diplomatic coup to end the Gulf conflict, hoping to deflect attention away from his virtual civil war at home and back to his reputation as Nobel Peace Prize winner. Moscow hardliners would be happy to see Saddam remaining in control.

Avoidance of this "nightmare scenario", which Washington sees as merely postponing critical issues, is a key factor in the decision to launch the next phase of the war. American officials denied that the intense bombing of Baghdad was a signal to Mr Primakov. But administration sources said that the timing of the raids was certainly not changed in order to avoid the Soviet envoy.

Leading article, page 15

AMMAN ENQUIRY

Refugees say 60 die on buses

FROM ADAM KELLNER, IN AMMAN

JORDAN began investigating reports yesterday from refugees fleeing the war zone in Kuwait and Iraq that about 60 civilians — including 30 Jordanians — died in allied air strikes on two buses.

Travellers arriving in Jordan told of the attacks on Saturday and Sunday, saying each action left 30 people dead.

Some civilian drivers arriving in Jordan are said to have plastered mud over their vehicles in an effort to camouflage against air attacks.

In the Saturday attack, witnesses said a missile fired by an allied aircraft hit the road as the vehicle, crammed with 53 Jordanians, drove out of Kuwait.

"We started running out and then another missile struck the middle of the bus and 30 people, including four little children, were burnt to death," said Chehab Ibrahim, aged 50.

He and other witnesses said about 25 people escaped, some with light wounds. Other travellers who left Kuwait at the weekend confirmed the incident, and reported seeing charred bodies in the burnt-out vehicle as they passed.

The Monday attack took place on the Amman to Baghdad highway just before midnight, when allied aircraft hit a vehicle filled mostly with Sudanese passengers, according to one of the survivors, Ahmed Ali, aged 30.

He said about 30 people were killed and ten wounded in the assault, which left the vehicle destroyed.

Many allied raids have concentrated on western Iraq in efforts to locate missile launchers used for attacks on Israel. Refugees said Iraqi engineers had created detours around destroyed bridges and sections of road.

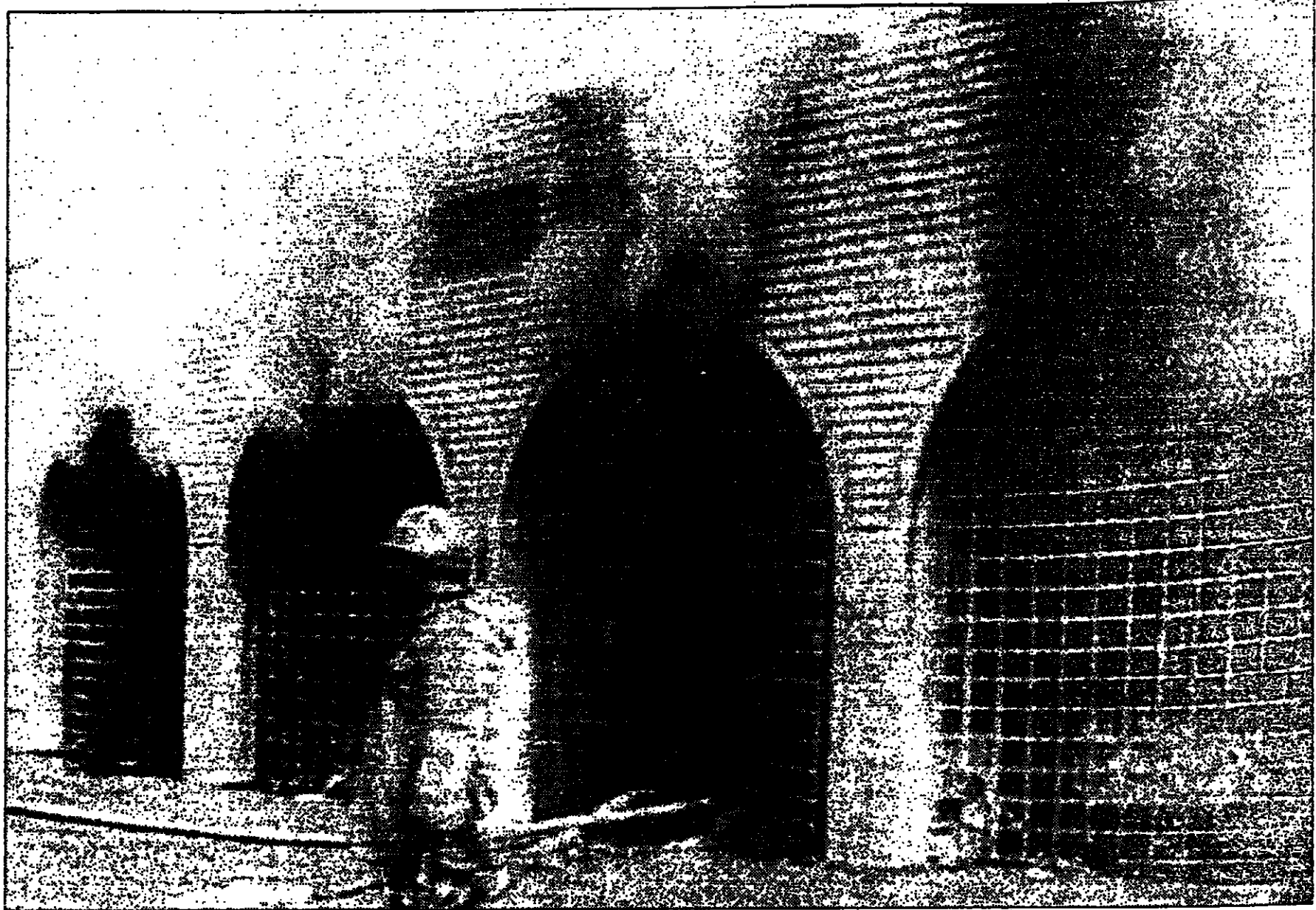
The deaths, if confirmed, are certain to fuel increasing anti-Western sentiment in Jordan, and the immediate reaction from officials was guarded. "The precise details are not available," an interior ministry official said. "We are investigating."

A Jordanian Red Cross official said ambulances and paramedics had been sent to the Iraqi areas of Basra, Ramadi and al-Qaim to search for Jordanian dead and wounded, and confirm the attack.

Only last week, coalition jets strafed and bombed tankers ferrying oil to Iraq along the vital Amman-Baghdad roadway, killing nine drivers and wounding 12 others.

Amman protested to Washington, which replied that the tankers were believed to have been Scud missile carriers. King Hussein of Jordan then delivered a speech in which he spoke with emotion about the suffering of the Iraqi people and called for peace in the Gulf.

President Bush rebutted the monarch's assertions that the war was unjust and the next day, Washington said it was reviewing \$55 million (£28 million) in aid it provides to the kingdom, which has called for an Arab solution to the conflict.



Attack aftermath: smoke billowing from entrances to the Baghdad underground air raid shelter hit by allied missiles early yesterday. Hundreds of Iraqis were killed

COMMONS REACTION

Left-winger accuses Hurd of having blood on hands

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND JOHN WINDER

DOUGLAS Hurd was accused of having "blood on his hands" by a left-wing Labour MP yesterday as the Commons reacted to reports that as many as 500 Iraqi women and children had been killed by a United States missile attack on Baghdad.

George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow, Hillhead, faced angry Conservative protests as he accused the reported civilian deaths to press the case for ending the bombing of Iraqi cities.

The foreign secretary repeated the government's insistence that the allies were taking all possible steps to avoid civilian casualties, while acknowledging that war and tragedy often went together. The ultimate responsibility lay with President Saddam Hussein.

Mr Galloway was backed by other left-wing MPs such as Gavin Strang, Labour MP for Edinburgh East and a former frontbencher, and Jim Sillars, Scottish National Party member for Glasgow Govan. However, while MPs were clearly troubled by the scale of reported civilian losses, there was little sign that the missile strike on what the Iraqis maintained was a bomb shelter and what the Americans said was a command centre had shaken cross-party support for the war.

The Commons exchanges came as the government confirmed that 1,000 square miles of the Bristol Channel has been designated as an area for the emergency jettisoning of bombs by American B52s flying sorties from Britain against Iraq.

Archie Hamilton, the armed forces minister, said the area off Hartland Point was a permanently designated military danger area and covered a gunnery range used daily by the RAF. The likelihood of it being needed by bombers running into difficulties after taking off from RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, some 20 minutes flying time away, was "extremely remote".

Mr Hamilton told MPs that any bombs dropped would not be armed and that pilots would check the coast was clear before unloading their weapons.

Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, described the loss of innocent lives in the Baghdad bombing as a "cause of international mourning". However, he joined Mr Hurd in holding President Saddam to blame for the havoc being wreaked in the region and accused him of exploiting the raid for propaganda purposes.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said the destruction of the "shelter" appeared to be the result of a "dreadful mistake or miscalculation". He

echoed Mr Hurd's reminder that tragedies happened in war. The allies should have the humility to learn this lesson while finding the "courage to stick to our military task".

Mr Kinnock said the Iraqi leader could bring peace at once if he wanted. Otherwise, the conflict would continue and his own people and many others would suffer further.

"We know that Saddam will try to use the tragedies experienced by the Iraqi people to obscure the atrocities which he has deliberately committed," the Labour leader said in a statement.

Mr Galloway said in questions to the foreign secretary: "When, on day two of the war, I described aerial bombardment of cities as, by definition, mass murder, I was ridiculed by the prime minister and the foreign secretary."

"As Mr Hurd watched television, and the charred ribbons of women and children swept out of the air-raid shelter in Baghdad, did it occur to him that some of the blood of those innocent civilians is on his hands and on the hands of those making murderous war on civilian targets in Baghdad. Will he stop the bombing of cities now?"

Mr Hurd responded: "The greatest possible care is being taken to avoid indirect attack on civilian targets and targeting is as precise as has ever been achieved in the history of modern war."

"There is no doubt that war has its tragedies and sometimes they occur even with the greatest possible care and precision. That is why responsibility lies so heavily on someone like Saddam Hussein who commits aggression and refuses all peaceful alternatives to reverse that process."

Sir Peter Blaker, a former armed forces minister, congratulated the allies on their efforts to avoid civilian casualties. He suggested "Iraqi terror squads" were responsible for more innocent loss of life than the allied bombing raids.

Mr Sillars and Mr Strang both argued that the destruction of the building would undermine the Arab element of the international coalition ranged against Iraq. Mr Hurd said that the resolve of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria to confront Iraq would not be shaken.

AIR FORCE TARGETS

Civilian casualties give Saddam a propaganda coup

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE precision missile attack on the Iraqi air raid shelter in Baghdad, which killed an estimated 200 people, took place on the 46th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden. Allied aircraft dropped about 3,500 tons of bombs on Dresden on February 13, 1945, killing more than 35,000 people a few months before the end of the war.

This time it was just two missiles aimed deliberately at a protected Iraqi bunker, said by the American military to be a command and control centre. While there is no reason to doubt the American conviction that this was a legitimate target, it raises a number of vital questions which, if nothing else, will force the American and other allied commanders involved in targeting strategy to apply greater caution, especially when the targets are in or close to civilian areas.

Bombing Baghdad was always going to be a risky business when the stated policy of the allies was to avoid civilian casualties and to hit military facilities with bombs and missiles that could be guided with such accuracy that the Americans took pride in showing off the results on video.

Precision bombing sounded fine, provided it worked. Once "collateral damage" became the familiar cry — the accidental destruction of civilian property and the death of non-military Iraqis — public perception of precision bombing changed.

Not enough is known to make a proper judgment of yesterday's attack. But there has to be a strong possibility that the satellite pictures have been misinterpreted. Satellites have high resolution cameras, and legend has it that the best can distinguish one mullah from another by the size of his beard. But a bunker with a 15ft-thick roof will look like so many of Iraq's reinforced buildings, constructed over the last six or seven years as protection against Iranian missile attacks, that there is room for doubt.

Since the invasion of Kuwait, President Saddam Hussein has pursued a strategy in which civil-

ians, whether his own nationals, or foreigners held as hostages, have been treated as pawns. The foreign hostages, who were finally released after Saddam realised they were no longer serving his purpose, were kept at military, scientific and economic sites in an attempt to protect his installations from allied air attack. Now prisoners of war are being held at strategic sites for the same reason.

As soon as President Bush and other allied leaders made a point of saying that the air campaign would avoid civilian targets, Saddam took advantage by deploying anti-aircraft batteries, mobile communication systems, fighter planes and other vital war-fighting equipment into civilian areas. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander, reported at one stage that Saddam was believed to be spending much of his time in hotels and other civilian buildings. Some military establishments were also deliberately made to look "innocent" to mislead American satellites. This was a tacit admission by the Iraqi leader that the allies were following a strictly military targeting policy.

Since the issue of civilian casualties moved to the forefront of the Iraqi propaganda campaign, Baghdad has sought to capitalise on any incident. Yesterday's tragedy will give Saddam ammunition, even if the Americans are able to prove their claim that the air raid shelter was a command and control bunker. The death of one civilian is bad news for the allies. The death of one civilian or 200 is good news for Saddam because he can use it to claim to the rest of the world, and in particular to the Muslim world, that he and the Iraqi people are now the victims, not the aggressors.

The Americans learnt from the bombing of Libya in 1986, that targeting could not always be a precise science and that it could lead to adverse propaganda if something went wrong. Some of the bombs and missiles from the US Air Force F111s and US Navy A6E fell on a populated residential area of Tripoli.



Faces of despair: grieving Iraqis waiting near the Baghdad air raid shelter for news of the dead and injured. Most of the hundreds who died were women and children

CITY AT WAR

Military goes to ground in the suburbs

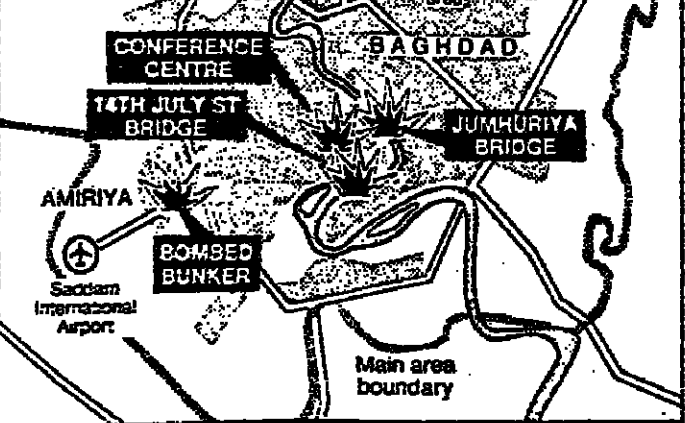
By HAZHE TEMOURIAN

THE district of Amiriya is one of the new suburbs of Baghdad and lies to the west-south-west of the city. It was, before the start of the war, largely a commuter district for middle-ranking civil servants. Since the beginning of hostilities, the government has dispersed its military administration to all the districts of the capital and beyond it. The American assertion yesterday that the Amiriya bomb shelter had been a command and control centre did not take many members of the Iraqi community in London by surprise.

"The whole life of Iraq has been taken over by the military since the war began," said one, who wished to remain unnamed. "I expect that all bomb shelters are now, at least in part, military headquarters if Saddam Hussein thought he could protect them better by allowing civilians to take

shelter in them. He would encourage it. No crime is beyond this man, if it helps him survive." Refugees who have reached Iraq from the Kurdish city of Sulai-

maniyah in recent days say the military there abandoned their barracks since they were attacked early in the war, setting up new headquarters in confiscated civil-



ian homes. The refugees said the allied aircraft dropped pamphlets advising civilians not to stay in the vicinity of buildings being used by the military. But it was not easy for people to abandon their homes. Other refugees from the north said the government had billeted thousands of Baghdad families in Kurdish homes.

An Arab Iraqi said that the microwave equipment of the country's civilian telephone network had been taken away for the use of the military. "And almost everything that moves has been taken over, particularly south of Baghdad," he added. "There is no such thing as a truck on the roads that has not been confiscated by the government."

Bomb shelters were built in Baghdad from 1984 during the first Gulf war. Few are thought to have had walls as thick as the one attacked yesterday is reputed to have had.

WAR IN THE GULF: DAY 28

ALLIED FORCES

SORTIES: The allies have carried out 67,000 sorties on Iraq and occupied Kuwait. Of 2,800 sorties during the past 24 hours, 700 were against targets in Kuwait and 200 on the Republican Guard.

SHIPS: Destroyer HMS Cardiff and frigates HMS Brazen were given the go-ahead to pull out by Commander Christopher Craig, head of British naval forces. Both vessels have been at sea for more than five months. Four more British warships — Brave, Brilliant, Manchester and Exeter — have joined Gloucester and London.

CLAIMS: Brigadier General Richard Neal, a US military spokesman, said that the Baghdad air raid shelter, in which hundreds were claimed to have been killed by American bombing, was a military command and control centre. British planes successfully attacked the Iraqi multi-carrier rocket launchers and a plane producing fuel for Scud missiles. Pilots scored nine direct hits with 1,000lb laser-guided bombs on hardened aircraft shelters.

LOSSES: Allies list 33 allied troops killed in action, including 12 Americans and 18 Saudis. Twenty-two Americans listed as non-combat deaths; 45 missing in action, including 28 Americans, eight British, one Italian, nine Saudis, 12 prisoners of war, two British. Allies lost 29 planes, 22 in combat — 15 American, five British, one Kuwaiti and one Italian.

IRAQI FORCES

CLAIMS: Iraqi officials claimed 500 people were killed in the Baghdad bombing, the biggest reported loss of civilian life in the war. The attack was "a well-planned crime," a minister said. There were 1,000 people in the bunker.

ALLIED WAR AIMS

UN Security Council resolution 678 authorises Kuwait's allies to "use all necessary means" to uphold previous resolutions calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and its government's restoration. It also calls on the nations "to restore international peace and security in the area."

DAMASCUS HINT

Genscher says Syria ready to change tack and recognise Israel

By IAN MURRAY IN BONN AND MICHAEL BUNYON

SYRIA is prepared to become the second Arab country after Egypt to recognise Israel, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German foreign minister, told German journalists in Damascus yesterday after a two-hour meeting with Farouk al-Sharaa, his Syrian opposite number.

Herr Genscher said that during talks about a Middle East peace conference after the war the Syrian side showed it was aware that the Palestinians' desired aim of self-determination also meant "that Israel's security and right of existence must be recognised".

Syria has always refused to recognise Israel as anything but a "zionist entity" in the past and has acted as host and supporter of extremist Palestinian terrorist groups of the so-called "rejectionist front" which never accepted Israel's existence. If Herr Genscher is correct, this represents the first breakthrough needed to create a stable Middle East after the Gulf war is over.

He told journalists after his meeting that he had been given the clear impression that Syria was anxious to contribute to a postwar peace order in the region. For its part, Germany was ready to give Syria extensive aid to help its

economy after the war. Herr Genscher flew to Damascus from Cairo, where he had also discussed the need for building a new security structure in the Middle East after the war. In both capitals, he said yesterday, he had "very trustful get-togethers".

There was a new quality to bilateral relations, he said, and he particularly praised what he described as "the responsibly conscious policies" of the Syrians.

Such a Syrian move would be an astonishing reversal of policy by one of the most hardline Arab states. Syria has always been opposed to any partial settlement. It broke relations with Egypt, its former war ally, after President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

It fought a bitter engagement in Lebanon to prevent the Israelis establishing a zone of influence there. It wrecked the short-lived Lebanese peace treaty with Israel, and used its influence to stop Jordan joining peace talks.

But President Assad is a realist. He has always argued that Arab nations must be strong in order to bargain equally with Israel. He based this military strength largely on Syria's treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, and the continuous flow of Soviet arms. With the collapse of

Soviet power and influence in the Middle East, President Assad may now realise that he will obtain more by putting the Americans under an obligation to him. He made it clear long ago to Henry Kissinger and successive American administrations that no peace settlement can bypass Damascus.

Now he may be hoping that Washington will be persuaded by hints of recognition of Israel to put real pressure on Jerusalem to come to an international conference and make territorial concessions.

Despite Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights, Syria has never given up its claim to its territory. It scrupulously observed the US-negotiated partial disengagement over Golan — the only time Syria was ever drawn into the peace process. Damascus will demand, as a price for support of the international coalition against President Saddam Hussein that Washington include Golan among the territories whose future must be discussed at a peace conference.

Any swift recognition of Israel would be an about-face that most leaders would find hard to sell to their own public opinion. But President Assad has always kept an iron grip on his country.



Bargain bazaar: a British woman soldier, accompanied by a male serviceman, seeking further useful items after buying a kettle at a souk in a town close to British frontline positions in Saudi Arabia. The kettle will provide a touch of home comforts back at desert base camp

RAF TRAINING

Bonn allows low-level flights by British pilots

From IAN MURRAY IN BONN

BRITISH pilots going to the Gulf can train at low levels over Germany, Volker Rübe, senior foreign policy adviser to Helmut Kohl, the chancellor, said yesterday.

He said at a press conference here that the RAF had been given the necessary permission for aircrew being sent to the war to practise down to

250ft and that if they had not done so it was only because of a "misunderstanding" between the defence ministries.

"The position is quite clear and I have talked to the defence ministries about it," he said later in a BBC interview. "The pilots on the British side will be given permission and I think we

should do this in the light of a situation where Germany can't send its own pilots. British pilots will be given permission... Everyone who leaves Germany for the Gulf will be given permission to do so."

He said it was a mystery to him how the misunderstanding had arisen. During a visit

last week to London he said he had been astonished to find that the ministry of defence did not think pilots were allowed to do low-level training. "We are not endangering the lives of pilots by restrictions here in Germany. That is what the government thinks. I know that if they ask they will be given permission."

Herr Rübe is not a member of the government, but as general secretary of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) he is one of Herr Kohl's closest and most trusted confidants and must know what the chancellor is thinking.

Low-flying training was ended last September after the America agreed that the end of the Cold War meant there was no need to continue these highly unpopular flights. However, the RAF was given special permission to resume this training for a fortnight for pilots going to the Gulf.

A request was put in to extend this, but according to British sources it was turned down. No subsequent request has been made.

Herr Rübe has made it plain that the RAF only has to ask and permission will be given for pilots on the way to the Gulf. Special permission of this kind was given to the United States air force in December and to the Luftwaffe last month.

The permission would have to come from Gerhard Stoltenberg, the defence minister, who is in Turkey at present. A ministry spokesman said last night that no request from the RAF was yet in hand.

In a separate development Germany yesterday gave Israel DM 150 million (£52 million) to buy Patriot missiles from the United States. The cash should be enough for at least 100 Patriots capable of shooting down Scuds, providing Israel with protection even after the Gulf war has ended.

Germany had offered Israel some of its own stock of Patriots, but these were designed for use only against aircraft and were not suitable. The government decided it was quicker and easier to give money to buy the appropriate variety than to retrofit the German Patriots. The money is in addition to the DM 250 million in humanitarian aid which Israel is already being sent.

Having given the United States 60 "sniffer" tanks for detecting chemical and biological weapons, Germany has now agreed to provide them to both Israel and Egypt. These "Fox" tanks, a kind of tracked, armour-plated laboratory costing DM 2 million each, are a German invention, developed as part of a defensive arsenal for use in a unconventional European conflict.

Israel is being given eight of them, and Egypt, which some years ago was refused permission to buy any on the ground that Germany did not sell weapons to an area of tension, is now being offered several for use by its 35,000 troops in the Gulf.

Britain is being provided by Germany with a significant amount of the military equipment and munitions it needs in the Gulf.

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AMERICAN ARABS

War opens rift in community

From CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK

RASHID Noori, an Iraqi immigrant, stands outside the Masjid Marouq mosque in Brooklyn and speaks for the agony of thousands of fellow American Arabs. "I am an American, but it is a tragedy what Bush is doing," says Mr Noori, who sports a baseball cap of the New York Mets. "They are destroying my homeland and my people. The Americans just don't seem to realise we are people."

You hear the same lament up and down Atlantic Avenue, the heart of the big Arab quarter in Brooklyn. The war with Iraq has inflicted deep wounds on the American Arab community, which numbers some two million descendants of Christians who came from the old Ottoman empire at the turn of the century, and about 300,000 immigrants who arrived over the past two decades, most of them Muslim.

Arabs have suffered from a negative image in the American public mind since the foundation of Israel in 1948, and particularly since the 1973 Opec oil embargo. Many Americans make few distinctions between Arabs, or indeed any Middle Eastern Muslims, including Iranians. Few are aware of the Arab ancestry of many prominent citizens, among them John Sununu, the White House chief of staff.

Since the outbreak of war, the "mike-Baghdad" outlook has promoted a veritable open season of Arab-bashing in cartoons, talk-shows and barroom banter. Media accounts of the Saudi treatment of women and the

lack of democracy among the coalition's Middle Eastern allies have undercut goodwill.

Albert Mokhiber, president of the American-Arab anti-discrimination committee, says: "People point at us and say 'They're all terrorists, they're all oil barons, they all have 40 wives' and nobody really cares." Mr Mokhiber, an American-born lawyer, has been lobbying to draw attention to the harassment of Arabs since the invasion of Kuwait. He won a small victory this week when Pan Am relented on a policy barring Iraqis from its flights.

Mr Mokhiber is incensed that the FBI seems to think that "Arab-Americans have some innate knowledge of terrorism". FBI agents have been interviewing Arabs across the country, often visiting them at work and questioning their associates.

Police have reported a rash of anti-Arab incidents since the war started, among them the bombing of a mosque in San Diego, in Dearborn, part of the Detroit area and the city with the biggest Arab population, a local newspaper reported 700 cases of harassment. In New York shopkeepers with an Arab appearance say they have received threats.

To help reduce tensions, President Bush met a group of leading Arab-Americans earlier this month to listen to their concerns and assure them that the authorities would combat anti-Arab emotion, a force which is expected to grow if Iraq inflicts heavy casualties in a ground war.

Europe goes on offensive to take over Nato reins

From George Brock in Brussels

EUROPE'S institutions are fighting a discreet but important war for the control of the continent's defence, with America's dominance of Nato under renewed challenge.

The high stakes in this campaign and the anxiety it creates in some quarters of the American administration are disguised by the dead language of alliance geometry. But the future relationship of the European Community, Nato and the overlooked Western European Union (WEU) is more than a matter of shuffling the acronyms.

If future decisions in the next few months go one way, the American military link with Europe may eventually be undone. If they go the other way and the link remains, the Americans may achieve their long-sought aim of persuading Europe to pay a larger share of the bills for joint defence.

The pivot of the debate is the nine-country WEU, whose secretary-general, Willem van Eekelen, is in Brussels tomorrow for a meeting with Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission. Not by coincidence, M Delors is also holding a meeting today with Manfred Wörner, the Nato secretary-general.

The French and German governments have suggested that the WEU should become the defence arm of whatever machinery emerges from the European Community's attempts - severely hampered by divisions over the Gulf - to design new ways of deciding joint policies. Senior officials in the US State Department have told the European Commission that they are keen to see the community work towards a role in defence.

Other American officials are less relaxed about where tampering with the institutions might lead. William Taft, the US ambassador to Nato, said recently: "American public opinion would not understand any proposal aimed at replacing Nato by a different mechanism which would take on the fundamental role of defence and defence."

So far, all suggestions for further integration of European defence assume that it would be inside Nato. The dream of a more cohesive and self-reliant "European pillar" in the alliance has been the subject of more conferences, speeches, books and briefings than almost anything else in Nato's 40-year life. The pillar is still where it began: on the drawing board. However, the debate about a European "common foreign policy" has not been suppressed by the rows over diplomacy and deployments in the Middle East. The wish remains strong elsewhere in the community for fresh movement - even if only symbolic - towards "political union".

But there are deeper pressures pushing European defence interests closer together. US administrations used to exhort Europe to combine more effectively and to shoulder more of the cost of their own defence, but did not alter their European commitment when they saw little sign of it. Now, accumulated resentment over the disproportionate American bill for nuclear protection and for the troops in Europe and the Gulf has turned up the heat. An angry congressman told European parliamentarians recently: "We don't want to play rent-a-cop, especially since we're not even being paid proper rent."

The contrasting performances in the Gulf have shown how differently nuclear powers such as Britain and France react compared with their European neighbours. Defence planners are now returning to the thorny question of how to tempt France - which stands halfway outside Nato - back inside a Western alliance. The cost of armaments makes joint purchasing and development ever more necessary.

Here the community, with a headquarters stacked full of experts on economic integration, should and will undoubtedly play a larger role.

Civic Forum unity pact under threat

Prague - The Czechoslovak Civic Forum movement faced fresh problems as its chairman, Vaclav Klaus, threatened to resign if an emergency congress did not ratify an agreement reached at the weekend to reconcile rival factions within the movement. (Chris Pomeroy writes).

The fragile unity agreement enables Mr Klaus to form a political party under the forum umbrella. But this move is opposed by most of the movement's leaders.

Mr Klaus is now banking on the emergency congress, in ten days' time, backing his proposal. But his resignation threat greatly increases the chances of the forum splitting sooner rather than later.

Alia warning

Vienna - President Alija of Albania warned striking students he would not give in to their demands, the state news agency said. In his first big speech since widespread unrest erupted in November, Mr Alija admitted grave political and economic errors but said these could not be corrected by demonstrations. (Reuters).

Jumbo alert

Tokyo - A United Airlines jumbo jet returned to Tokyo after a passenger reportedly claimed to have a bomb, but officials said it appeared to be a prank. A foreign ministry statement said the pilot decided to return as a precaution. There were 296 passengers and a crew of 20 aboard the San Francisco-bound Boeing 747. (AP).

In the wings

Moscow - A Russian Federation commission is considering restoring the old double-headed eagle as an emblem, but stripped of the orb, crown and sceptre that symbolised the tsar's authority. Other proposals to replace the hammer and sickle include a Russian warrior striking a snake or a bear. Tass said. (Reuters).

Kremlin and Russia share foreign visitor

From Mary Delevsky in Moscow

THE prime minister of Mongolia, Byambasuren, left Moscow yesterday after a six-day visit which was hosted first by the Soviet government and then by the government of the Russian Federation. This unprecedented "sharing" of a foreign statesman between the centre and the biggest Soviet republic illustrated both how much and how little leeway the centre intends to grant the Soviet Union's republics.

In recent months visiting foreign leaders have increasingly sought and been given meetings with the Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, or his prime minister, Ivan Silayev, but they have rarely been formally hosted by the Russian government, even for a day. Yesterday Mr Byambasuren's final press conference came under the auspices of the Russian foreign ministry.

Mr Byambasuren told reporters that his "dual" visit had come about because he had written to Mr Silayev proposing a visit. Mr Silayev had then suggested that he combine it with an official visit to

the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation revamped its hitherto largely decorative foreign ministry late last year and announced its intention of seeking direct ties with foreign states, particularly those bordering on the Russian Federation.

Last month, for the first time, a representative of the Russian foreign ministry was invited to attend talks with the visiting Japanese foreign minister which were believed to have dealt with possible Japanese investment in the development of eastern Siberia. Now, Mr Byambasuren has been formally a guest of the Russian Federation.

The two sides signed an economic co-operation agreement, intended to help boost direct ties between enterprises, and a friendship declaration. They also discussed improving border arrangements. This is probably the level at which the central Soviet authorities would like direct relations between Russian and foreign countries to remain.



Squire dance: Peking couples practising a few steps in sub-zero temperatures before going to work yesterday. Many Chinese still prefer traditional shadow-boxing as an early-morning exercise

Costner's epic wins 12 Oscar nominations

From Charles Bremner in New York

HOLLYWOOD showered 12 Oscar nominations on Kevin Costner's revisionist Western, *Dances With Wolves*, yesterday and surprised the film world by anointing the ill-fated *Dick Tracy* with seven nominations and listing the lightweight but popular *Ghost* in the best film category.

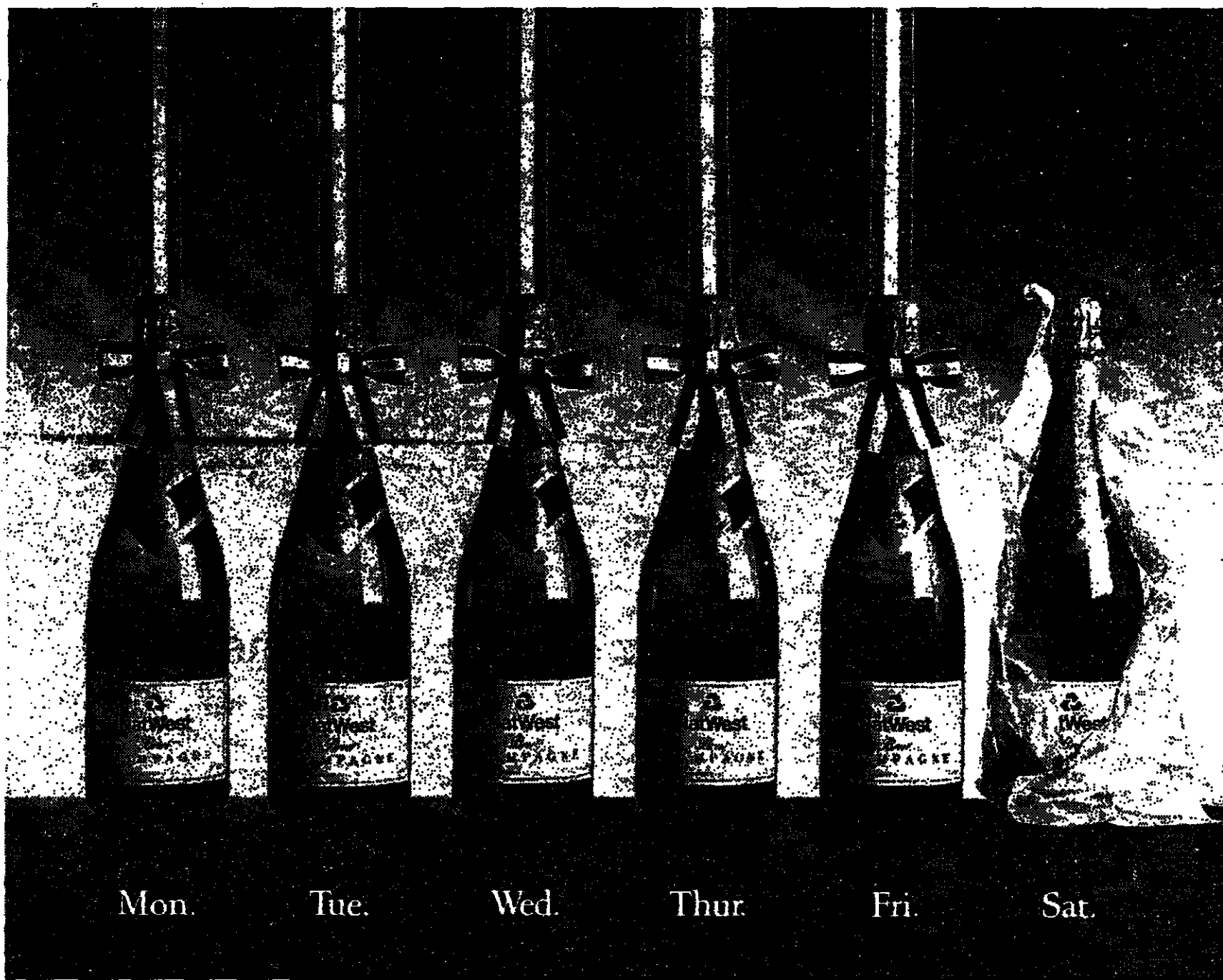
Jeremy Irons was nominated for his portrayal of Claus von Bulow, the socialite accused of attempting to murder his rich wife, in *Reversal of Fortune*. Britain's Stephen Frears was nominated in the best director category for his dark underworld tale, *The Grifters*. The Hollywood academy took the unusual step of nominating a foreign language actor, Gerard Depardieu, for his role as Cyrano de Bergerac. Other candidates are Robert De Niro in *Awakenings* and Richard Harris in *The Field*.

The academy also appeared to have bowed to commercial influence by nominating Julia Roberts as best actress for her role as the prostitute with a heart in *Pretty Woman*. Hollywood rarely awards Oscars for comedy roles and Roberts's

acting abilities have drawn little critical acclaim. Others in the best actress category were Anjelica Huston (*The Grifters*), Meryl Streep (*Postcards from the Edge*) and Joanne Woodward (*Mr and Mrs Bridge*).

Costner's epic was widely viewed as classic Oscar material. No film since *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in 1966 has received more nominations. Only *Reds*, in 1981, Warren Beatty's version of the Bolshevik revolution, has received 12 before. Costner, who produced, directed and starred in *Dances*, was nominated for best actor and director among other categories. Competing with him and Frears for best director are Francis Ford Coppola for *Godfather III*, Martin Scorsese for *GoodFellas* and Barbet Schroeder for *Reversal of Fortune*.

Few critics expected so much attention for *Dick Tracy*, which barely broke even, earned poor reviews, and was acknowledged recently as an embarrassment by Disney, its makers.



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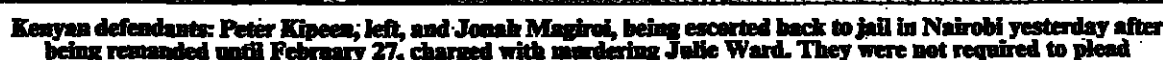
FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

Paul Kennedy, acting for Mr Kgase, said his client had "an objectively well-founded fear of death or bodily harm", and that it was "humanly intolerable" for him to testify. "He feels there is no adequate protection," Barend Mono.

The last slender hope for the prosecution is that Mr Mekgwe, the missing youth, is found alive and well. Mr

Kgase said he would be prepared to testify if his friend returned safely. The prosecution moved for a postponement until May or June in the hope that Mr Mekgwe would be found. He opposed a suggestion by Mr Justice

Deadlock on the issue has held up negotiations for seven months. President de Klerk led the government team at the talks in Cape Town on Tuesday. The ANC side was headed by Mr Mandela. Details of the agreement will be released after it has been ratified by the cabinet and the ANC executive committee.



From AP
IN NAIROBI

George Omondi-Tunya, the chief magistrate, ordered that they be held in custody until February 27 when the case will again be brought to court. The defendants would face the death penalty if convicted.

Miss Ward's partly charred lower left leg and lower jaw were found in the reserve on September 13, 1988. Police at first said she was killed by wild animals, but her father, John Ward, a Suffolk hotelier, insisted she was murdered and pressed for an investigation.

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FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN KHU KHAN, THAILAND

Paris — Nuns running soup kitchens in the French port of Marseilles were doling out Russian caviare this week after police impounded 33lb of the delicacy from Soviet sailors, who were caught selling their contraband at knock-down prices from makeshift stalls. (Reuter)

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Alan Walters

Half a point is not enough

Yesterday's half-point cut in base rates was a move in the right direction. But that is all. The Chancellor was feeling the temperature of the markets rather than taking the needed plunge. It was politically astute. He can claim to have done something, and the cut is so small that it is unlikely to beget a run on sterling. Thus we can continue to bump along the lower limit of our ERM band and hope that some other thing, such as German interest rates, turns down to save our face. The trivial size of the cut implies that the Chancellor believes the risk of a slump is small enough for him to continue his monetary squeeze.

But there is convincing evidence of an incipient deep recession. Output from British factories in the three months ending November 1990 was 2.7 per cent lower than in the previous quarter — the largest fall since the deep recession of 1981. Nor can the government claim this was an aberration: manufacturing output has been falling since March 1990. More insidiously, the service industries — particularly financial services and distribution — now appear to be feeling the pain too, which was not the case in 1981.

The dramatic fall in output has been greeted with more or less universal astonishment. Economists and civil servants alike have been shocked by the rapid increase in unemployment.

'To save the British economy from a fearful slump will require great political courage'

For far too long the government refused to admit that there was a recession, or said that if there were, it would be mild and short. But accounts of the sad state of sales, orders, expectations and the effects of high interest and exchange rates have been so frequent that only the most insensitive could fail to detect that all was not well.

We now bear much less about the need to keep up the battle against inflation, although some old inflation fighters are still active. There is broad agreement that inflation is on the way down to between 5 and 6 per cent at the end of 1991. A slump is the real worry. Last September, I argued that the world economy, and Britain in particular, was heading for a recession. Because of our formal entry into the ERM, I forecast a prolonged and deep recession similar in scale to that of 1980-81, though different in form. I still believe this is the best forecast one can make, although some momentous external event may give it a dramatically different twist.

Why were the City scribbles, Treasury mandarins and pundits so wrong? First, there was, and is, a considerable underestimation of the powerful effects of monetary policy. Interest rates at 15 per cent, for the year to October 1990, when underlying inflation was about 7 per cent, gave real interest rates of about 8 per cent — considerably in excess of those that preceded the deep recession of 1981. One would expect these levels to give the real economy a fearful blow beginning some six to twelve months after their imposition. Although needed

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

They have gone; all of them. Until last week's ice and snow, we in Marylebone had only to look out of the window or walk down the street to record a sighting of a pair or more. In early December last year I spotted six of them at dusk on the corner of Queen Anne Street; had intended to write to the local paper but did not get around to it. Now they have disappeared — like ants after a thunderstorm; though unlovely and unloved, they had become part of our environment. If this is the first conservationist voice to be raised, it may not be the last: we were accustomed to their presence, had adapted our lives around them. It is going to be different.

What is unusual, when you take into account the decline of a threatened species, is the suddenness of its demise. One has this uneasy feeling that Westminster city council got the wrong strain, should have invested in an altogether sturdier, more weather-resistant genotype, perhaps cross-bred with eskimos... but failure to prepare adequately for extremes of weather is a common British fault. The plain fact is: last Wednesday we had meter maids, traffic wardens, car clamps, tow-away trucks; since Thursday we have had none. Then you saw them; now not. In the intervening week you considered what a waste of time they were.

When the dustmen withdrew their labour, the effect of their inactivity was wondrous to behold: great mountains of black polythene were piled on

pavements and obstructed gutters. The well-read, ether-tinged, private-medical aroma of Wimpole Street was overpowered by the stench of rotting garbage. The area took on a whole new immediacy.

Today, as I look down on the cars parked on snow and slush at unfed meters, over single yellow lines and double yellow lines, in designated taxi ranks, suspended residents' parking bays, even a piece of roadway optimistically inscribed "Reserved Diplomats", all is calm and orderly. Apart from massaging the unemployment figures and providing the council with the wherewithal to impose a £195 poll tax, we need a regulatory vehicle control force about as much as we need earwigs.

None of my children became a parking-meter attendant, and I would have been disappointed had any of them wished to. Like other branches of public service, it is a negative occupation and one in which it is difficult to come to the attention of your peers. He is nominated for the title Meter Attendant of the Year, feature in Sunday supplements as The Meter Attendant's Meter Attendant.

It is an ill wind... and the parking industry's loss has been the burglar's gain. In the hall of the house where I live perched above an assortment of medics, there is a table on which the receptionist sets out our mail, a mirrored dresser on which my fellow residents' Daily Telegraphs glare at my more liberal newspapers; also a hat and coat

The Soviet prime minister's barely credible allegation about a financial plot to overthrow President Gorbachev and ruin the Soviet economy found few takers in Moscow yesterday. Cynics remarked that the Soviet economy was in such straits anyway that it hardly needed an elaborate conspiracy to finish it off.

Those most disturbed were precisely the people to whom Mr Pavlov's claims were not addressed: the foreign community and potential western investors. If the Soviet leadership had wanted to signal its displeasure with their activity, it would have chosen means other than the newspaper of the official trade union organisation, which is read mainly by blue-collar workers.

That this was a message to the Soviet public is not in doubt. For many, however, the bigger issue was what it said about the new Soviet prime minister and, more generally, about President Gorbachev's new team.

Superficially, Mr Pavlov's allegations could be dismissed as a

clumsy and probably futile attempt to convince the Soviet people that the physical suffering and financial losses they endured as a result of last month's ill-conceived monetary reform were not in vain. The cloak-and-dagger tone — "the time has come to lift the curtain a fraction..." — might have been calculated to seduce people into thinking they were being made privy to real secrets.

The deeper question is whether Mr Pavlov himself believed so fantastic a conspiracy theory (probably fed to him by the KGB), or whether he was deliberately and cynically appealing to a section of the population whose support is crucial to pushing through unpopular policies such as price rises or a ban on strikes.

Opinions about Mr Pavlov are mixed. Some foreigners who had close dealings with him in his previous post as finance minister say that he is one of the more original, intelligent and charming members of the Soviet admin-

istration. They say he was open to fresh ideas and ways of doing things, and that he admitted at once if he did not understand.

This openness is vital to any Soviet official involved in financial discussions with Westerners. Few, on either side, appreciate the gulf in understanding which separates Soviet from western finance. If Mr Pavlov appreciated this gap, then he has progressed further than many of his contemporaries.

Against this hearsay, however, must be set Mr Pavlov's career as a state bureaucrat in the financial sector, through the years in which perestroika was signally failing to make inroads into central planning. His job before last was in the state statistics committee, a bastion of economic falsification.

The new prime minister's bearing and manner also fail to inspire confidence. He looks like a giant hedgehog, slumps in his chair and speaks indistinctly. Last weekend, Soviet television showed him at home, in a pullover, drinking tea.

Russian viewers noted with disdain that he left his spoon in the cup and drank noisily. The contrast with his urbane predecessor could hardly be greater.

There is a view that Mr Pavlov's interview simply confirmed what more sophisticated Russians had suspected, that Mr Gorbachev's new team is inferior to the one that went before. It is too early to judge for sure, because Mr Pavlov and his four deputies, the new foreign minister, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, and the interior minister, Boris Pugo, are the only members to have been confirmed.

It is tempting to contrast the "characters" of the previous government with the lacklustre bureaucrats of the new. In reality, however, some of the difference is an illusion created by the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze from the foreign ministry. He was both colourful and approachable, and he took risks. Mr Ryzhkov, the former prime minister, had been director of the vast industrial

complex of Uralmash before joining the government, but he was still a bureaucrat schooled in the Soviet ways. So too, was the interior minister, Vadim Bakatin, who came through the party hierarchy.

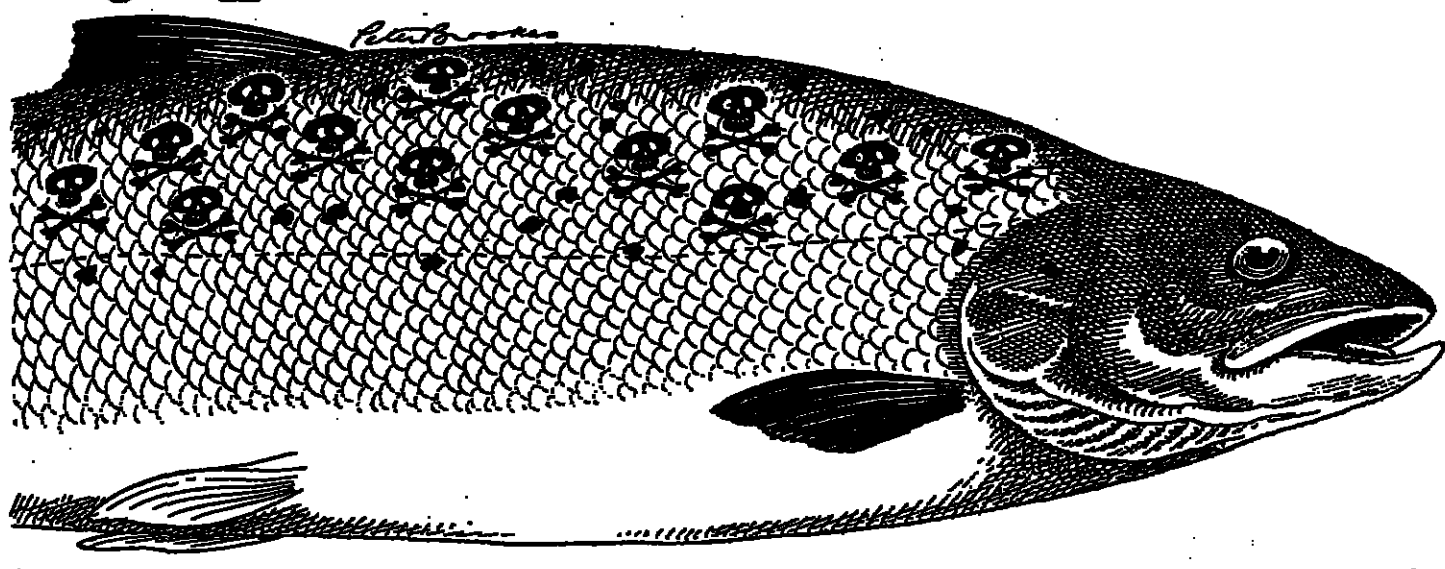
If there is a substantial difference between the old team and the new, it is that all the new men are thoroughly reliable professionals in that section of the Soviet system to which they have been appointed. Mr Pugo at the interior ministry is a law-and-order man through and through, and always has been. Mr Pavlov has always been in economics and finance; Mr Bessmertnykh, the new foreign minister, is a career diplomat, with all the polish, and lack of originality, associated with that training.

The new team is experienced, competent (within the limits of the Soviet system) and totally reliable. Its lack of originality means it will be loyal, so the risk of unpleasant surprises is reduced. For those on the sidelines, life will be less interesting, but this may be just what Mr Gorbachev had in mind.

Mary Dejevsky on Gorbachev's new, clumsy aide

Bernard Levin swims against the official tide on a smoked salmon ban

Nanny puts her hooks in



It is notoriously difficult to mark precisely the moment at which a country's freedom has been so eroded by ministers and their officials that serious thought must be given to pelting these pestilent busybodies with offal in the streets or putting rat-poison in their coffee. But I think it is now time for the rat-poison.

A year or two ago (I have referred to this several times, and I still receive letters from correspondents who clearly believe it is a joke, which it isn't), legislation was passed under which it was made a serious criminal offence to enter from your home, however gently and lovingly — say, with a bag of insects for each party guest — any bat or bats that had taken up residence there. (And keep your voice down, or the bastards will get you into court for the insects.)

"The appetite doth grow by what it feeds on": Shakespeare didn't know the half of it, for only a couple of months ago a new law was coined which went in impudence much further than the bat-impudence, if only because the fine for breaking this one is £2,000, double the bat-impost. Now, we are criminals if we stamp on an adder — a poisonous snake which kills a child from time to time, though to the people who thought this one up an adder is much more important than a child, and that isn't a joke either. But what they have done now must surely signal the point at which we must take a stand or resign ourselves to a life of endlessly multiplying regulations, mostly dreamed up by civil servants with overworked ministers who cannot scrutinise everything put before them and indeed who might even be horrified when they discover what they are now obliged to defend. The rat-poison, please, and a spoon.

In a number of items — not many, but a satisfactory list — British food, which was once the despair of the world, can now challenge that of almost any other country. Among the most notable of these triumphs is the quality and variety of smoked fish we produce. Nowhere, certainly not in France (which deservedly car-

ries off more culinary prizes than any other nation), is there smoked salmon to touch ours for succulence and flavour; the same goes for smoked trout and other aquatic beasties, including eels.

Many years ago, there was a shop in Old Compton Street which sold every kind of smoked product, including the finest kippers I have ever tasted in my life. The fame of the shop (it had the devastatingly inappropriate name of Hamburgers) had spread very widely; when I found it and its treasures it had been there for a long time; its excellent products and the knowledge of them had led to a considerable mail-order business all over the country.

Well, that source of fast-food food is no more, but I am happy to say — or, as you shall learn, I was until a few days ago happy to say — that the practice of sending such goodies through the post has flourished mightily, to the mutual satisfaction of the firms that provide such delicacies and the customers who consume them with delight; for one Hamburger and Co there are today scores of such suppliers. But we are now in danger of losing the lot, because the pestilent busybodies with whom I started have decreed that the entire trade is to be abolished.

You think I jest, or exaggerate? You are wrong on both counts.

"They" have decided that such enjoyment must cease, and the pretence they are maintaining (for even they are not yet ready to tell the truth in these matters, which is indeed that enjoyment must be stamped out wherever it is found) is that there is a health risk. No matter that there is not a health risk. No matter that this admirable postal service has been going on for decades without any harm accruing to anyone. No matter that the business has grown so to have the methods by which cleanliness, freshness and purity have been guaranteed. No matter that the modern policy governing "sell-by dates" provides yet another safeguard for the recipient. No matter — oh, no matter at all — that the customers want the business to continue. Some worry in the Department of Health has found a legal means of reducing pleasure, and he is about to achieve his aim.

Do you realise that it is all Mrs Thatcher's fault? Oh, she hasn't had anything to do with it directly, and if she reads this it will surely be the first inkling she will have had, but it is her fault, for switching Kenneth Clarke from the Department of Health; do you suppose that that glorious advertisement for pleasure, never seen

without a mini-cigar in mouth and a beer-belly hanging over his belt, would have listened for more than five seconds to the weevil who brought him the proposal before kicking him down the stairs?

You only have to take one look at his successor as secretary of state — the etiolated William Waldegrave — to see that he has never been drunk in his life, and that if you offered him a very ripe pheasant, perfectly cooked, his first action would be to pour a bottle of Dietol over it.

There is a robust MP, Anthony Steen, from Devon, a robust place, who has gone to war on this nonsense. He showed the nonsense for what it was in these robust words:

I would point out that smoking is an ancient way of preserving food. If it did cause harmful bacteria to multiply, I doubt the population would have survived one winter in the early Middle Ages, let alone centuries. This could put paid to very successful businesses. We are getting neurotic in this country about food. We ought to get it in perspective.

And not only in perspective, but also on our plates. A more than ordinarily hapless minister called Dorrell, from the Department of Health, was put up to tell Mr Steen about the forthcoming regulations and the wholly imaginary dangers, but when Mr Steen asked how

many cases there had been of food poisoning caused by posting smoked fish, the answer was none. Later, the department said that micro-organisms could grow in smoked salmon; I dare say they could grow in what Mr Dorrell uses for a head, and they could certainly grow in the fur on Kenneth Clarke's tongue, though there they would be welcomed as an extra taste and consumed with relish.

There is an additional lunacy to this business: the proposed regulations do not yet apply to Scotland, which does the greater part of this trade; it is not clear whether imaginary micro-organisms don't grow north of the border, or whether the Department of Health has noticed that there is already hardly a Scottish Tory MP with a safe seat and that running an entire Scottish industry might be unwise.

The last thing heard from the Department of Health was that they were "trying to act before anyone is seriously ill". No they aren't; they are trying to act before people seriously enjoy themselves. Later, the EC is about to abolish the whole of the British smoked fish trade, not just the postal service, because the hooks used for smoking are, it says, insufficiently corrosion-resistant. And that isn't a joke, either.

Prophet out of her own country

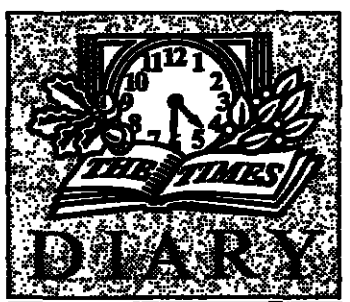
If there really was a western plot to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev, Mrs Thatcher was not involved. She is due to fly to Moscow later this year with a dual mission: to revive the flagging fortunes of the Soviet leader and to help sow the seeds of Thatcherism in the Kremlin. During her stay Mrs Thatcher will see not only Gorbachev, but also his rival Boris Yeltsin, who by all accounts is an equally staunch admirer.

During her trip, she will give a series of television interviews in which she will try to bolster support for the man she "could do business with". She may even hold a TV debate with Gorbachev. A source close to Mrs Thatcher says: "With Gorbachev's current difficulties it will do him no harm at all to be seen on television chewing the fat with the Iron Lady."

Mrs Thatcher will also use the trip to support Russia's fledgling free-market think-tanks. Only two weeks ago the monetarist economist Lord Harris of High Cross flew to Moscow to open the International Centre for Research into Economic Transformation, dedicated to the "marketisation" of the Soviet economy.

Harris, founder of the Institute of Economic Affairs, also hopes Mrs Thatcher will open the Centre for Liberal Conservative Policy in Moscow. Its founder, the Russian politician and physicist Arkady Murashev, has written to her: "There is no exaggeration to say you represent an ideal political figure. We would desire to dedicate the centre to you."

Mrs Thatcher could be forgiven for thinking she is fast becoming a prophet without honour in her own country when, on her trip, she seems certain to explore the possibility of opening a Moscow office of her proposed International Thatcher Foundation.



The Gulf war has spawned a battery of cocktails at the Centaur Hotel in Bombay. Desert Storm is a potent mixture of whisky, Drambuie and martini; the Sea (brandy, white rum, Cointreau and vodka) packs quite a punch, especially when interrupted by a Patriot (tequila, Cointreau and rose syrup). If anyone is still standing after such a pounding, a Stinger (cherry brandy and white rum) should leave him totally shell-shocked. As for the taste of all this...

Showing his colours

Britain will see a new-style Lech Walesa during his state visit in April. The former electrician, whose crumpled appearance is little changed since his emergence from the Gdansk shipyards, is the latest and perhaps unlikely national leader to turn to the image-makers.

Walesa has commissioned a new wardrobe from Modus Polona, the state-owned fashion house set up in the 1950s as a socialist answer to Dior and Balmain. Designer Krystyna Wasylkowska says: "His shape is not ideal, but it was a challenge I understood, for I am small and round, too." She has created four outfits in Italian wool, brown tweed and grey flannel, together with a suitable range of accessories — and a colour chart to show what matches what. One colour is omitted. After years of communism, it can only be red.

Ultimate deterrent

The Kuwaiti government in exile is planning a desert rock concert as a post-war thank you to the allied troops. It has had talks with the British company Creative Concern, whose organisation of the Jean-Michel Jarre extravaganza at London Docklands suggests that something spectacular is afoot. So far, no performers have been definitely signed, though international stars are promised.



Point taken

Commuters on the train from St Albans stuck in a tunnel outside London's St Pancras station for 40 minutes yesterday morning were sure they knew the face of the man trying to put a call through on his mobile telephone. Eventually the reason for the familiarity dawned. It was Eric Roberts, British Rail's area manager, whose face adorns posters all over the region as the man passengers should ring with their complaints about poor service.

His cover blown, Roberts stalked the length of the train asking if anyone had what he called a "poser phone" that would work in the tunnel. No-one had. "It was unbelievably bad luck," he said. "There was a massive hydraulic failure to the points that could have happened any time, regardless of the weather. I don't have a magic wand."

prints adorn the walls of country pubs. Yet according to Isabella Tree, *The Ruling Passion of John Gould* is published today by Barrie & Jenkins. Gould could scarcely draw, but took the credit for sketches by his wife Elizabeth and by Lear, among others.

The suggestion that Lear had played a part in "working up" Gould's original sketches was made by Eva Manninger in a 1955 edition of Gould's work. Although Tree makes no reference to this earlier research, she goes much further. "What Gould did was bordering on a fraud. He treated Lear very badly in modern parlance, he ripped him off," she says. "At best Gould was callous and ungenerous; at worst he was deliberately playing on Lear's weakness and jealousy guarding the limelight."

Among the drawings in Gould's *Birds of Europe* which Tree attributes to Lear is a particularly fine *bubo maximus*, the eagle owl. The pussy cat, however, is nowhere in sight.

Point taken

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DIRECT HIT IN AMIRIYA

There are few certainties in war and few about yesterday's American bombing of a building in Amiriya, five miles from the centre of Baghdad. Clearly a large number of civilians were killed, many of them women and children. The bombs which killed them were precision weapons, accurately aimed at what the targeters believed was an operational command centre, constructed in the 1980s as an air raid shelter. Iraqi officials claim this was a direct hit on a packed civilian shelter, with several hundred deaths. Dismayed civilians have confirmed this to western reporters.

Allied military briefers are "completely confident" that this was an active command and control bunker, and therefore a legitimate military target. They deny any breakdown in intelligence. They claim that the building had been adapted to military use, recently camouflaged, and that signals traffic had been intercepted over the past fortnight and military activity detected. The Americans say that intensive monitoring had revealed no civilians in the building. They were mystified by their presence.

Iraqi and American versions of the incident are not wholly incompatible. President Saddam Hussein is capable of allowing civilians to be used as cover. He has stationed tanks and planes near houses, schools and historic sites. His use of Scud missiles against civilian targets and his killings in Kuwait do not suggest much concern for human life. Before the allied bombing offensive, he evacuated obvious military targets in Baghdad, including the defence ministry, into schools and other civil buildings. Siting a command centre in a nighttime air raid shelter would be an inexcusably callous extension of this policy, but would not be surprising.

Out of date intelligence is always a danger given Iraq's policy of planting military installations in civilian areas, particularly in cities. The allies have relied on precision

bombing to an extent never before in air war. This minimises civilian casualties but can still cause enough to create international concern. The closer to residential areas the bombing, the greater the risk.

The military commanders in the Gulf must clearly review their list of targets. This is not a matter of playing "hard or soft". As with the Israeli response to Scud attacks, decisions in a political war are always a mix of military gains and losses. The isolation of Saddam from the majority of Arab opinion since the invasion of Kuwait is a crucial strategic goal. Anything that diminishes that isolation strains the alliance, undermines Western belief in the war and risks prolonging or even aborting it. Saddam knows that. There is no point in playing his game.

War is littered with the mismatch of military and political judgements. Sometimes humanitarian factors must be sacrificed to military success; sometimes the reverse. Allied spokesmen were recklessly confident of the swiftness and technical sophistication of their attack in the early weeks of this war. They are now saying that, even after 67,000 sorties, continued bombing is needed to save soldiers' lives in a land war. This may be true, but only as long as other strategic, including political, goals are kept in view.

There is now a strong case for concentrating bombing on the Kuwaiti front and on obvious military encampments, and thus avoiding Saddam's obvious propaganda trap. Western public will find it hard to believe that there are still targets in Iraq's towns and cities which it is militarily indispensable to destroy. Military spokesmen may continue to blame Saddam for "causing" any civilian casualties, by his heartlessness and his intransigence. But that is only part of the story of war. It does nothing to diminish yesterday's tragedy, nor diminish the importance of trying to avoid it recurring.

WHERE IS THE OLD RELIGION?

The prime minister, John Major, has made great play of not allowing politics to interfere with his management of the economy. Surely no more. His policy is no different from that of his forerunners: politics first, economics second. Yesterday's decision to take a mere half per cent off base rates, as the economy moves into ever deeper recession, was a timid response to political and financial pressures that are biting into the Conservatives' electoral self-confidence.

Mr Major as Chancellor said now as prime minister has reiterated that he would not cut interest rates until inflation showed unmistakable signs of coming down. The first such sign apparently came last autumn, with remarkable timing just before the Conservative party conference. This next one came on the eve of yesterday's Commons debate on the economy, with the prospect of a furious barrage against the government from its backbenchers.

The economic strategy of the present government is opaque, as it has been since the mid-1980s. Ministers say that the defeat of inflation is their prime concern, though Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, yesterday indicated a return to the 1960s with a fixed rate for sterling as his lodestar. Yet last month Mr Lamont granted his own public-sector employees wage rises of 8 to 10 per cent, well above expected inflation. Paradoxically, yesterday he told private employers to be less generous.

For the past two months, both Mr Major and Mr Lamont have been trapped in the language of counter-inflation policy. The prevailing Treasury ethos holds that "good" chancellors repress demand, "bad" ones allow it to expand. This takes a modest pride in the steady expansion of 1982-87, but reserves its finest battle honours for the recession of 1980-81 and, presumably, that of 1990-?. Both Mr Major and Mr Lamont are imbued with this ethos. For both men,

to cut rates would have been a weakness so early in the new administration, a retreat under political pressure, a sign of panic.

This defeated the apparent intention last autumn, which was to continue with further phased cuts to ease a widespread recession. By yesterday, the failure to do this had become a sign of an equal and opposite weakness: weakness in the face of the great god, Europe's exchange rate mechanism (ERM). Having abandoned a floating currency at the mercy of market forces in favour of a fixed exchange rate last autumn, Messrs Major and Lamont could not decide how to react when market forces returned to hit them in the face. Industrialists, Thatcherite economists, backbenchers and a majority of the cabinet were demanding a rate out. The Treasury's proud motto, "If it isn't hurting, it isn't working", was no longer appropriate to a recession which had long since begun to hurt the wrong people - mostly Conservatives, including ministers themselves.

The half-point cut is unlikely to be enough to stave off a further rise in bankruptcies and unemployment in coming months. As is the nature of Britain's traditional stop-go economic policies, most of the damage will be to the more progressive, high-risk firms created in the expansion of the late 1980s. The public sector, granted protection by Mr Major and his Treasury ministers, is proving remarkably untouched by recession.

A bigger fall in rates might have damaged the value of sterling within the ERM, though the thesis is unproven. But presumably Mr Major accepts that sterling's price should sometimes be adjusted against other currencies. If ever there is a time to put sterling to the market test it is in recession. Most ministers won their political spurs saying that markets should determine prices, including that of the currency. Is there no shred of the old religion left in this cabinet?

PAYING THE PIPER

A plumber was once a top craftsman, a man who possessed secrets beyond the comprehension of other mortals. He was a master, as his name implies, of lead: how to shape it, melt it, pour it. Above all he knew how to wipe molten metal onto a pipe-joint with his bare hands inches from the blast of a pump-pressured blowtorch, to create a bulbous lump of solidified solder, watertight under any pressure.

Before the advent of copper pipes and self-soldered joints, plumbing was an impenetrable professional mystery, all the more as its rites were often performed in the darkest corners of the loft. Such craftsmen could charge more or less anything they liked, plus extra for their "mate". Like all professionals, their fees were on the high side of reasonable.

Some modern plumbers, in sad contrast, are experts at little more than slotting pipes together and over-charging for it. In the present cold snap, and as the Great Thaw of 1991 gets under way, householders must face a once-skilled trade that is degenerating at its edges into a rip-off. They may find bills that would shame a QC, presented for simple repairs sometimes made less simple because many modern plumbers lack the old skills in lead-work.

Much modern plumbing requires little skill, as is apparent from the shelves of DIY supermarkets with their array of copper, brass and plastic fittings. Amateurs and semi-professionals can plumb in where once they feared to plunge. As a result the plumbers' associations which try to monitor standards of work and levels of charging have lost control.

The cold weather has brought out all the cowboys, all the sharp practices of a craft in

decadent decline. It is time plumbing - and the bills that go with it - were demystified. Many plumbers' bills are too high not because of skill now, but because of the memory of skills past. Many are also too high because of the unequal relationship between the "expert" and the ignorant customer when the latter's carpets and furniture are being ditched.

A householder who possesses not even a screwdriver may admit that he or she needs a professional to attend to a burst pipe, especially if the pipework is pre-war lead or iron. But even such victims can improve their negotiating position if they can manage a running repair by themselves. Leaks can often be controlled simply by turning off stop-cocks or by the application of plastic binding tape. Those whose kitchen drawers contain not only a screwdriver but a fair selection of spanners should realise that they may not need a plumber at all, but a good hardware store.

Even if defeated by the leak, they need not be defeated by the cowboy plumber. His best ally in extortion is customer ignorance, which he can sense at a glance. Even the most untechnical of householders can equip themselves with a DIY guide to plumbing, left open on the table when he calls. Or they can engage him in conversation about "compression rings", "Yorkshire fittings", "15mm elbows" or the latest British Standard specification for brass knuckles - and watch the cowboy ride away in panic. Scaring them off is far better than statutory regulation, as advocated by the respectable plumbing trade, which would solder in place the professional mystique of plumbing just when it should be melted away.

Muslim loyalties and Saddam's war

From the Ambassador of Kuwait.
Sir, Mr Waleed Ahmad (February 11) raised the possibility of dual loyalties of British Muslims. In fact there is no clash of loyalties. The majority of Muslim countries support the present United Nations action to expel the aggressor out of Kuwait.

This war which Mr Ahmad calls unjust is being waged against the Iraqi regime, which in its own description is secular. Its very secular nature may explain the condoning of alcohol sales in Iraq and now in occupied Kuwait. It may also explain the callous murder of a number of innocents and the burning of seven prayers in mosques in Kuwait.

This secular regime has embarked on a policy of brutal suppression of the Muslim population of Kuwait. It has used torture, mutilation, rape, looting and massive destruction of the infrastructure of a fellow Muslim country as an instrument of that policy.

Muslims of other nations such as Egyptians, Yemenis and Sudanese have been forcibly conscripted into the Iraqi forces.

Mr Ahmad seems to be unaware of the relentless efforts of Muslim dignitaries and the numerous peace initiatives undertaken by Muslim countries such as Algeria and Iran to convince Saddam Hussein that the best interests of the Muslim world would be served by the withdrawal of his occupying forces from Kuwait. Opponents' reports by foreign correspondents and fleeing immigrant Muslim workers confirm that the suppressed Iraqi people are against the occupation of Kuwait and regard the present hostilities as Saddam's war, not theirs.

Yours faithfully,
GAZI AL-RAYES,
Ambassador of the State of Kuwait,
46 Queen's Gate, SW7,
February 13.

7) suggests, this war is not about Islam against the West. In many ways, it is more realistically about the exploitation of millions of Muslims for entirely material gain.

Yours faithfully,
UMAR I. HEGEDUS
(Chief Executive),
IQRA Trust,
24 Calross Street, W1,
February 8.

From Mr Jonathan Shine
Sir, I read with interest today's letter from one of your Muslim readers in which he expresses through his dual loyalties (British and Muslim) his wish that war in the Gulf be brought to an end.

I believe we have a classic example here of someone who has fallen into Saddam's trap - make it look like the allies are "attacking" the Muslim world. Yet anyone with their eyes even half open to the situation can clearly see that Saddam's despicable, brutal and genocidal dictatorship has nothing to do with Islam - it is its antithesis. Muslims must expressly disassociate themselves from and condemn him if they wish to gain credibility in the world as peace-loving, moral religiousists (which is what Islam should be about).

Why are Muslims so silent, when wicked people do evil in the name of their cherished religion? Is it any wonder that so many get the wrong impression?

Faithfully yours,
JONATHAN SHINE,
Hill House, Greenhays Lane,
Manchester 15,
February 11.

From Mr Umar I. Hegedus
Sir, Iraq is said to have stated (report, February 7) that the Allies are seeking "to bomb Iraq out of the 20th century." Yet President Saddam Hussein is largely responsible for ensuring that one of the world's main oil producers enjoys standards of social services, housing, education and non-military infrastructure well below a number of his neighbours.

Iraq's massive expenditure on building a war machine capable of keeping one million under arms, in a country with a population of only 18 million, has been achieved at the cost of wider economic progress. It is doubly true that Saddam Hussein, the secular leader of an essentially secular party, has cynically and misleadingly used Islam, a religion that counsels peace, as justification for the impoverishment, and now the decimation, of his country.

As your leading article (February

From Captain H. H. Bracken, RN (ret'd)
Sir, The allies are making preparations for the custody and care of a large number of Iraqi prisoners of war. I am sure that they will be treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention, nevertheless being a POW is a degrading experience, particularly if one is entirely dependent upon the good will of one's captors.

I still remember with gratitude the support we received in World War II from the Red Cross, thanks to the generosity of people here in Britain and of Americans and Canadians.

Mr Waleed Ahmad's letter illustrates the dilemma facing British Muslims of how to square religion with a loyalty to one's country. May I suggest that one way of mitigating their anguish would be for the Muslim community to "adopt" the Iraqi prisoners and send them food, other comforts, letters, etc. The Red Cross which, I understand, works in close co-operation with the Red Crescent should be willing to assist.

Yours faithfully,
H. H. BRACKEN,
The Old House,
Groombridge, East Sussex,
February 11.

Homosexual curbs

From Mr Peter Tatchell
Sir, Mr John Patten, the Home Office minister, claims (report, February 9, early editions) that the Criminal Justice Bill has "nothing to do with increasing the penalties for victimless homosexual offences, or indeed changing in any way the relative seriousness with which the law regards offences of a homosexual, as opposed to heterosexual, character."

Regrettably, the minister is wrong on both counts. Clause 2 (2)(b) of the Bill, which covers (among other things) four consenting homosexual offences, states:

A custodial sentence passed on the offender shall be... in the case of a case of indecency committed by the crown court for a violent or sexual offence, for such longer term (not exceeding [the permitted] maximum) as is in the opinion of the court necessary to protect the public from serious harm from the offender.

Justice Bill is thus explicitly discriminatory against gay and bisexual men.

Since four of the homosexual offences listed in Clause 25 are entirely victimless, as Mr Patten now tacitly acknowledges in his letter to Mr Robin Squire, MP, why are they criminal offences in the first place? Surely the government's proposed amendments to the Bill should not only delete all four consenting gay offences from Clause 25, but should also repeal all those sexual offences laws which still continue, nearly 100 years after the trial of Oscar Wilde, to discriminate against the gay community.

Yours sincerely,
PETER TACHELL,
69 Cowcross Street, EC1,
February 11.

Actors in public life

From the President of the British Actors' Equity Association
Sir, I would like to inform Mr Fintoff (February 12) that it is not "he or she" who is president of Equity. It is myself. I have been in that position for the last 4½ years. In the last election in 1990 I topped the poll of the entire membership (some 45,000 members); presumably this is why I am elected president for the years 1990-92.

The low profile to which he objects is currently forced upon any

trade union by the legislation that the Thatcher government instigated in recent years. Our union works for better conditions and pay for everybody in the entertainment business (not technicians or musicians who have their own unions).

This job we shall continue to do, whatever legislation is thrown against us.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL DAVENPORT, President,
British Actors' Equity Association,
8 Harley Street, W1,
February 12.

Adverse conditions

From Miss Fiona Foster
Sir, I took a sack of miter (pre-franked) mail to the Broadwick Street Post Office, Soho, at 5pm on Friday. "Due to adverse weather conditions" it had closed at 4pm.

I proceeded to the late-night post office in Trafalgar Square. It, too, had closed at 4. I had no option but to return with the sack of mail to my office, finally leaving for home, on public transport, at 3.45.

The Post Office has thousands of employees. It seems extraordinary that none of them was available to take in meter mail, even if it was not possible to man the counters. It is good to know that Mr Major is aware that our public services need improving (report, February 11).

Yours faithfully,
FIONA FOSTER,
104 Sydney Road,
Raynes Park, SW20,
February 12.

From Mrs Marjorie Smedley
Sir, We should not believe that other countries cope better than British do under wintery conditions.

In Washington DC in 1985 and 1986, the city was unbelievably upset on several occasions by a snow-

Tax relief on mortgage interest

From the Director-General of the Building Societies Association
Sir, Your leader of February 4, "Unblessed relief", greatly exaggerates the adverse effects of mortgage tax relief. There is no reason to argue that it "underlines the treacherous cycle of boom and bust in the housing market by subsidising purchasers to pile in when the market is rising". It subsidises purchasers at all times; in fact, when the market is rising the effect of tax relief progressively diminishes, given the £30,000 ceiling.

You claim that tax relief adds to the price of land, increasing the speculative rewards for those granted planning permission for house building. Tax relief is built into the price of land and does not cause that price to rise faster than it otherwise would do. Indeed, given the £30,000 limit, tax relief is deflationary, in that the higher that prices are the less is the proportion subsidised by tax relief.

The impact of tax relief on individual house buyers has sharply reduced in the past 10 years. You state that the ceiling would now be £45,000 if it had kept in step with inflation since 1983. In fact, the figure would be £72,000. The limit was originally established at £25,000 in 1974; to maintain that real value would require a limit now of £135,000.

You rightly point to the increasing total cost of tax relief; but to a large extent this reflects higher interest rates and a rising level of owner-occupation, neither of which are of benefit to individual home owners. It is more relevant to look at the proportion of housing costs met by tax relief.

In the mid-1970s tax relief on average met between 40 and 50 per cent of interest costs. That proportion has subsequently fallen to about 20 per cent. Clearly tax relief has been having a declining impact, which no doubt helps to explain why arrears and possessions have increased more in this recession than in previous ones.

The reduction in mortgage tax relief has been achieved in a way which has minimised damage to the housing market. It would be unfortunate if, at this time in particu-

lar, precipitate action was taken which could do further damage to a housing market in deep depression.

Yours sincerely,
MARK BOLLEAT,
Director-General,
The Building Societies Association,
3 Savile Row, W1.

From Mr M. F. Kelly
Sir, Could not tax relief be confined to first-time buyers only, the definition of whom would include spouses, co-habitants and existing borrowers? The only property on which relief would be available would be that purchased under the first, or existing mortgage.

This would provide help for lower-income first-timers and inhibit movement out of first homes until reduced prices cancel out the loss of tax relief. In this way new borrowers would be assisted, existing borrowers would be no worse off and the Treasury would gain because of a gradual diminution of tax relief claims.

Initially this might slow down the housing market, but as prices reduced the market would recover, with the possibilities of lower overall taxation and inflation.

Yours faithfully,
M. F. KELLY,
88 Bishops Road,
Whitchurch, Cardiff.

From Mr J. R. Kirwan
Sir, You are mistaken in supposing that mortgage interest relief benefits all owner-occupiers. Only one in three of them has a really heavy mortgage. The debt of another one in three varies from moderately heavy to very light. One in three has no mortgage at all.

Tax-free imputed rental income benefits all owner-occupiers, and the more costly the house the greater the benefit. The consequent perverse redistribution is enormous.

The fault with mortgage interest relief is that it is given on untaxed income. Tax the income and the relief will then make moral and economic sense.

Yours sincerely,
J. R. KIRWAN,
3 Evelyn Close,
Botley, Oxford.

The law's delays

From the President of the Industrial Tribunals of England and Wales
Sir, I fear that your correspondent, Mr A. Page (February 11) has not allowed his apparent indignation with the Lord Chancellor to be troubled by facts.

First, there was no "edict" of the Lord Chancellor's Department in 1990 not to use part-time chairmen in industrial tribunals. These tribunals are funded by the Department of Employment, not the Lord Chancellor, and the decision to limit sittings of part-time chairmen last year was taken by my predecessor.

Second, to say that the attitude of courts is "that the judge's time must not be wasted" is to fail to appreciate that the time and money being wasted when the parties are not ready to proceed, is that of staff, jurors, judge and court overheads. It also means that those whose cases are awaiting trial in the future have to wait longer - the basis of Mr Page's first complaint!

Yours faithfully,
TIMOTHY LAWRENCE,
President,
The Industrial Tribunals of England and Wales,
93 Ebury Bridge Road, SW1.

Loan swapping

From Professor J. F. Garner
Sir, It is obvious that the recent decision of the House of Lords in the loan-swapping case of Hazell v. Hammonds and Fulham council (report, January 25) will have serious financial consequences for many local authorities.

As a result of this decision a local authority may not repay to a bank money lent to them as a result of this kind of speculation. Many local authorities are concerned, and it seems that the banks will lose millions of pounds.

If the banks are not able to recover these sums, they will, in future, be chary of lending to local authorities, or at least to lend to them only on harsh terms. This cannot be in the interest of either local authorities or the banks.

An honest way out would be for the secretary of state to exercise his power under section 19 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982 to sanction such repayments by local authorities, either in response to individual applications, or in a general circular. By this means, public confidence in local authorities could be restored.

Yours faithfully,
J. F. GARNER,
102 Wollaton Vale,
Nottingham.

Tables turned

From Sister Isabel Veitch
Sir, Mr Neil Freeman (February 5) sold an "indoor car boot sale". The day-care centre for the elderly where I work recently held its first "atitc sale". We advertised "tables, £5 each" in the local free press.

The next day a woman came in to buy a £5 table as she needed a new one for her dining room.

Yours faithfully,
ISABEL VEITCH,
St Francis Convent, 2 Slaty Road,
Birkenhead, Merseyside.

St Valentine

From Mrs Elizabeth Dutton
Sir, The first year of our marriage I sent my husband a beautiful Victorian Valentine card, and he spent all day trying to guess who had sent it.

In 45 years I have never sent him another!

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH DUTTON,
High Meadows, Playford,
Nr Ipswich, Suffolk.

From Mr Kevin Fitzmaurice
Sir, St Valentine died a martyr for his Christian faith, under the Emperor Claudius II, about the year 270. The Church used the date of his death (February 14) in an attempt to abolish the heathen custom of boys and girls frolicking in honour of the goddess Februata Juno. The plan misfired and the pagan mantle fell upon Valentine.

Surely there is no other figure in history so epoumously remembered for a practice in which he had no involvement.

Yours faithfully,
KEVIN FITZMAURICE,
Maripit House, Wroxham Road,
Coltishall, Norwich, Norfolk.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number - (071 782 5046).



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Love you

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ODE TO A BARGE
Thirty years have I been your
mate,
I'm the old barge,
And you're the new,
But I'll be with you
Till the day I die,
For I love you
More than life and pie.

MARRIAGE PAYS
I'm the old barge,
And you're the new,
But I'll be with you
Till the day I die,
For I love you
More than life and pie.

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Court of Appeal

Law Report February 14 1991

Court of Appeal

Indian juristic entity can sue here

Bumper Development Corporation v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and Others

Before Lord Justice Purches, Lord Justice Nourse and Lord Justice Leggatt

(Judgment February 13)

A ruined twelfth century Hindu temple in India recognised as a juristic entity in Indian law was capable of being recognised as a juristic entity in English law and could sue in the English courts to recover religious artefacts stolen from it.

The Court of Appeal so held, *inter alia*, in dismissing an appeal by the Bumper Development Corporation from the judgment of Mr Justice Ian Kennedy on April 17, 1989 on the trial of a preliminary issue which arose in an action brought by Bumper against the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and two of his officers to recover an antique Indian bronze sculpture.

The bronze, called a Nataraja, was a twelfth century statue of the Hindu god Siva. The Nataraja, which was bought by Bumper in good faith, was seized by the police as part of the policy of returning stolen religious artefacts to their owners.

The police interpleaded between Bumper and the claimants, (i) the Union of India, (ii) the State of Tamil Nadu, (iii) T. S. Sadagopan, suing as next friend and guardian of the fourth claimant, (iv) the Arul Thiru Viswanatha Swamy Temple and (v) Sivalingam in Arul Thiru Viswanatha Swamy Temple.

The claimants claimed that the Nataraja was the same as one stolen from the temple's site in Pattach in the State of Tamil Nadu.

Mr David Calcutt, QC and Mr John Stephens for Bumper; Mr Adrian Hamilton, QC and Mr Bhaskar Ghoshal for the claimants.

LORD JUSTICE PURCHES, giving the judgment of the court, said that the judge having held that the temple was a legal person under the law of

Tamil Nadu acceptable in the courts of that state as a party acting as representative, could have sued for the recovery of the statue in the courts of that state.

The question whether a foreigner could be a party to proceedings in the English courts was not to be determined by English law as the *lex fori*.

The novel question which arose was whether a foreign legal person which would not be recognised as a legal person by English law could sue in the English courts. The particular difficulty arose out of English law's restriction of legal personality to corporations and the like, that is, the personified groups or series of individuals.

That insistence on an essentially animate content in a legal person led to a formidable conceptual difficulty in recognising as a party entitled to sue in the English courts something which on one view was little more than a pile of stones.

The touchstone for deciding whether access should be given or refused was the comity of nations, defined by *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd edn) (1944) as "the courteous and friendly understanding by which each nation respects the law and usages of every other... without prejudice to its own rights and interests".

Their Lordships could not see that in the circumstances of the present case there was any offence to English public policy in allowing a Hindu religious institution to sue in English courts for the recovery of property which it was entitled to recover by the law of its own country.

That conclusion accorded with the intent and purpose behind the principles of comity. Furthermore, it avoided the danger of there being any fetter of an artificial procedural nature imposed from the *lex fori* which might otherwise stand between a right recognised by and enforceable under the *lex loci*.

Solicitors: Stewart, Lawrence Graham.

Sureties cannot benefit by own wrongdoings

Cerium Investments Ltd v Evans and Others

Before Lord Justice Glidewell and Sir Denys Buckley

(Judgment January 18)

Sureties who gave a landlord guarantee that the tenant would perform the covenants in his lease could not take advantage of their own wrongdoings to avoid their contractual liability.

Their failure to ensure timely registration of an assignment of the lease did not prevent them from being liable to the landlord for the tenant's failure to pay rent.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Cerium Investments Ltd, from the judgment of Sir

Peter Pain, who, sitting as a High Court judge on July 25, 1990, had dismissed their summons for summary judgment and had given unconditional leave to defend to the defendants, Mr Ernest John Evans, Mr Richard George Ford and Mr Stephen Brian Stubbs.

Mr Kim Lewison for the plaintiffs; Mr Anthony Allston for Mr Evans; Mr Christopher Conry for Mr Ford; Mr Roderick Doggett for Mr Stubbs.

LORD JUSTICE GLIDEWELL, said that the appeal raised a short, interesting but difficult point under Order 14 of the Rules of the Supreme Court. It was agreed that the court should decide the issue one way or the other in accordance with

the principle laid down in *European Bank AG v Owen* [1983] 1 WLR 642, 654C.

In 1987 the plaintiffs, as landlords, had granted licences to assign a lease and an underlease by clause 3 of the defendants' lease covenants, which provided that the assignees would pay the rent and perform the covenants in the lease.

Clause 4 provided that the licences "shall become null and void if" the assignments were not registered with the plaintiffs within one month of their taking place. The assignments were duly completed but not registered in time. The assignees got into financial difficulties and arrears of rent accrued.

The judge, giving the defendants, as sureties for the obligations of the assignees, leave to defend the plaintiffs' action to recover in respect of the arrears, held that the assignees' failure to register the assignments gave them an arguable defence, namely that on the failure the licence became null and void so that the defendants either never were under any liability, or, if they were, it expired at the end of the month to which their liability, to the plaintiffs.

On their appeal, the plaintiffs submitted that there was an established principle that a party could not avoid a contract or take any benefit under it on reliance on his own wrongdoing.

Upholder Establishment v Eton College [1988] 1 WLR 587.

The defendants, it was argued, had obligations imposed on them by the licences to ensure that the assignees would

pay the rent and observe the covenants in the lease, and to indemnify the plaintiffs against any breaches by the assignees of any of their obligations.

The failure, they said, to register the assignments was a breach of the covenants by the defendants to ensure the covenants were observed by the assignees. Thus the defendants were seeking to avoid their obligation to indemnify imposed on them by seeking to rely on their own breaches.

The defendants' case was that the licences created no obligations on them until all the requirements of clause 4 had been fulfilled. Thus as there was no registration the sureties agreed that they were never under any obligation and thus not in breach.

But that argument ignored the wording of the licence "shall become null and void". Clearly the licences were initially effective. They gave the right to assign.

On the assignments the defendants, as sureties, became contractually liable to the plaintiffs.

If the assignments were not registered within the stated time then the assignments were in breach of covenant and it followed that the defendants were seeking to say that they were under no liability as there had been no registration, were in error. The plaintiffs' submissions were correct.

Sir Denys Buckley gave a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Reid Minty & Co; Moxness & Co, Chiswick; Cotnam; Mylles & Co, Windsor.

Bath Society v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another

Before Lord Justice Glidewell, Lord Justice Stocker and Sir Denys Buckley

(Judgment February 6)

Failure by an inspector hearing a planning appeal relating to a designated conservation area (i) to consider recommendations for the appeal site contained in the local plan and (ii) to fulfil the duty imposed on him by section 277(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to pay "special attention" to the recommendations of an inspector to allow planning permission in respect of land in a conservation area was set out by the court.

Section 277 of the 1971 Act provides: "(8) Where any area is designated as a conservation area, the Secretary of State shall pay special attention to the recommendations of an inspector to allow planning permission in respect of land in a conservation area."

The proper approach to be adopted by inspectors hearing appeals for planning permission in conservation areas was set out by the court.

Section 277 of the 1971 Act provides: "(8) Where any area is designated as a conservation area, the Secretary of State shall pay special attention to the recommendations of an inspector to allow planning permission in respect of land in a conservation area."

The society's second ground of appeal was that the secretary of state was not shown to have complied with the duty imposed on him by section 277(8).

Neither the decision letter nor the inspector's report expressly stated that attention had been

paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. However, the judge concluded that passages in the report inevitably led to the inference that the inspector was alive to and giving proper weight to his section 277(8) duty.

What was the proper approach to be adopted to an application for planning permission in a conservation area? 1. The decision-maker had two statutory duties to perform, imposed by section 277(8) as well as section 29(1) of the Act. 2. In a conservation area the requirement under section 277(8) to pay "special attention" to the recommendations of the decision-maker was to be regarded as having considerable importance and weight.

3. If, therefore, the decision-maker decided that the development would enhance or preserve the character or appearance of the area, that had to be a major point in favour of allowing the development.

4. There would, nevertheless, be some cases in which a development could simultaneously enhance the character of the area but cause some detriment. That detrimental effect was a material consideration.

5. If the decision-maker decided that the proposed development would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the area, then it was almost inevitable that the development would have some detrimental effect on

it. Then the development should only be permitted if the decision-maker considered the character of the area outweighed the failure to satisfy the section 277(8) test and such detriment as might inevitably follow.

Despite reference to the conservation area throughout the inspector's report, it was not apparent that he had fulfilled his duty under section 277(8). It could not be read into the report that he had approached the matter as was suggested he should. There was no suggestion in the report that the development would enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The secretary of state in his decision letter simply agreed with the inspector's conclusions and accepted his recommendation. The flow in the inspector's reasoning therefore necessarily affected the secretary of state's decision.

LORD JUSTICE STOCKER said that the section 277(8) obligation was of particular importance.

That fact required that it be manifest from the inspector's report that close consideration had been given to the provisions of the section and it was insufficient that it was possible to spell out from the terms of the report that the inspector had, in some way, taken account of the section in mind.

Sir Denys Buckley gave a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Portner & Jaskel.

Holding stranger liable as a constructive trustee

Eagle Trust plc v SBC Securities Ltd

Before Mr Justice Vinelott

(Judgment January 15)

Before a stranger, to whom money had been paid in breach of trust, could, after he had parted with it, be held liable as a constructive trustee to account for it to its defrauded owner, the court must be able to infer from the circumstances that (i) he knew of the breach, or (ii) he was a blind eye to it, or (iii) he was wilfully or recklessly failed to make such enquiries as an honest and reasonable man would make.

The requisite degree of knowledge would be inferred only if the facts were such that an honest and reasonable man would infer from them that the money was probably trust money which was being misapplied and would either not have accepted it or would have kept it separate until he had satisfied himself that the payer was entitled to pay it to him.

Mr Justice Vinelott so held in the Chancery Division, in granting a motion by the defendant, SBC Securities Ltd, that the

plaintiff's claim that the defendant account to it for £13.5m of its money, which had been paid to the defendant in December 1987 by reason of fraud by its then chief executive, be struck out and its action dismissed.

Mr Jonathan Sumpson, QC and Mr Mark Haggard for the defendant; Mr Peter Goldsmith, QC and Mr Michael Brindle for the plaintiff.

MR JUSTICE VINELOTT said that the question was whether, if the plaintiff were able to establish the truth of all the allegations, many of which were disputed in its statement of claim, and if the defendant could call no evidence, the plaintiff could succeed.

In *Baden, Delvaux and Lecuit v Societe Generale pour Favoriser le Developpement du Commerce et de l'Industrie en France SA* [1983] 1 All ER 509, Mr Justice Fox said: "The knowledge of a man can comprise any of five different mental states: (i) actual knowledge; (ii) wilfully shutting one's eyes to the obvious; (iii) wilfully and recklessly failing to make such enquiries as an honest and

reasonable man would make; (iv) knowledge of circumstances which would indicate the existence of an honest and reasonable man; (v) knowledge of circumstances which would put an inquiry on a reasonable man on his mind and he had accepted a concession made by counsel that all five were relevant for the purpose of establishing a constructive trust.

His Lordship could not agree that the concession had been rightly made. In his view, knowledge falling within categories (i) to (iii) was essential in order to found liability, although in the absence of any explanation by the defendant, that kind of knowledge could be inferred from the facts, and would be, if the honest and reasonable man would have inferred from them that the money was probably trust money and was being misapplied.

The facts before his Lordship allowed no such inference and the plaintiff's action was struck out.

Solicitors: Linklaters & Paines, Berwin Leighton.

Changing pleadings as injuries develop

Owen v Grimsby & Cleethorpes Transport

It was not always necessary for the pleadings in personal injury cases to be amended each time fresh medical reports led to developments in the case.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Parker, Lord Justice Balcombe and Lord Justice Ralph Gibson) so held on February 4 in dismissing an appeal by Grimsby and Cleethorpes Transport against a decision of Judge Hutchinson, sitting as a Queen's Bench judge

in Lincoln, in favour of Peter Henry Owen.

LORD JUSTICE PARKER said that in personal injury cases which stretched over a long time it was common for the medical reports to change and to develop and it was not always considered necessary to add to the pleadings each time the medical position developed to step by step.

His Lordship accepted entirely that pleadings remained important. The corollary of that was that if one wished to stick to the pleadings and put reliance on them objection should be made when a party sought to go outside them.

How high flyers are laid low by the crash

Suicide, sickness and self-criticism are likely to soar among those living with the threat or the reality of redundancy, as Victoria McKee discovered

Stress, rightly or wrongly, was considered a high-status affliction in the Eighties, index-linked to the executive ladder. But as shell-shocked casualties of the recession stumble into doctors' surgeries, will the Nineties be remembered as the era of being "all stressed up with nowhere to go?"

"We are seeing a lot more of the stress of unemployment among white-collar workers and are having to learn to act as counsellors to help them cope," says Dr Terry Meredith, a computer-belt GP in Maidenhead, Berkshire. "The axe is hanging over a lot of people and whole families are breaking up under the pressure. They present with chest pains and migraines — somatic symptoms — but they know that stress is behind it."

Doctors are pretty well agreed that enforced unemployment increases the likelihood of all sorts of illnesses and accidents and causes the suicide rate to soar. "Most people's mental health deteriorates after they lose their jobs," says Dr Richard Smith, the executive editor of the *British Medical Journal*, "and the 10 per cent who don't deteriorate usually have some important reason for living outside their employment: it may be very religious, or politically committed. Unemployment may also be easier for pregnant women and young mothers," he says.

There is an increased death rate among the wives of unemployed men. They also produce smaller babies

Richard Schilling, a retired professor of occupational health, believes it is the sense of loss of control that makes losing a job, or working with the threat of redundancy, so stressful. "A firm that has told its people it's going to close or may have to have redundancies can produce devastating effects on the health of its employees, even before they lose their jobs," he says.

The biggest study of the effects of unemployment on health in Britain, carried out using government data in 1971, concluded that people looking for work had a higher mortality rate than those who were employed.

Since then, Dr Norman Beale, a GP in Calne, Wiltshire, has carried out a study of the health of workers at a local factory during and



Paranoia: Sophie Mirman and her husband say they had to learn not to blame themselves

people to come out into a professional business setting," says Stuart Trundle of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. Training, which helped to devise it, Graham Kenwright, who runs the club, describes it as a forthright, intensive "self-marketing" programme which also offers executives access to telephones, faxes and typewriters.

Jo Cutmore, the head of Jameson Scott, the executive search consultancy, is sceptical of such schemes and openly cynical about the business "outplacement" companies which offer similar services in a more mercenary manner. "So many bold out false hopes in the current climate," she says.

She has noticed that "some unemployed executives keep about them a veneer of cheerfulness and confidence, but then go home and kick the dog. They might have more to worry about in the long run than those who come and blubber to us about how awful everything is."

Most doctors and redundant workers talk of the strains that one partner's unemployment puts on a family. A woman executive who was made redundant, together with her husband, two years

ago, believes their marriage disintegrated because of his desperate desire to "reassert his virility in business and, in the interim, through finding a young lover."

"You often see the wife and children of the redundant man come in with lots of minor ailments," says Dr Meredith. And Dr Smith notes that "there is also an increased death rate among the wives of unemployed men. They also produce smaller babies, who are more susceptible to infections. It is undoubtedly a problem that affects the whole family." But, he cautions, "these findings are from the Seventies and now that we have mass unemployment among people with a higher level of health to begin with, it may not be quite like that."

The worst problem for Richard Ross and Sophie Mirman, when their Sock Shop empire folded, was the feeling of "paranoia". Mr Ross recalls: "We went through a period where we blamed ourselves for everything — for the weather and the interest rates and the strikes. The most important thing, we eventually learnt, is not to blame yourself."

"There's not nearly enough

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Feet first in the army

Boots-boots-boots-boots. Rudyard Kipling knew the importance to a soldier of his feet and also the effect on civilian heart strings, surviving yet reassuring, of the sound of "the feet of the men that drill". He might mourn that the scientifically designed soft-soled footwear no longer has the morale boosting potential of the ammunition boot but would be thrilled to see in Tuesday's *Times* that the army still cares assiduously for its troops' feet.

The photograph of Lieutenant James Gaselee, of the Life Guards, performing the "snuff test" on the feet of his men, all with their trousers neatly rolled above the knee, while he squatted to smell their feet and inspect the cracks between their toes with a probing instrument, will reassure generations of former soldiers that the army still sees that feet are kept dry, washed and healthy and nails carefully cut. The American army in Vietnam, not having been educated at Caterham, Farnborough or Windsor, failed either to find the right boots or the right foot care, and suffered appalling troubles.

Although the cracks between the toes can, if neglected, become infected with bacteria to cause an inflammatory condition, erythrasma, Lt Gaselee will be seeking with his nose and probe to find *truncal pedis*, which can be caused by a wide variety of fungi and yeasts, in particular *T. rubrum*, *T. interdigitalis* and *E. floccosum*. The fungi, the cause of athlete's foot, produce extracellular enzymes which enable them to feed and flourish in the stratum corneum of the skin, or under the nails.

Dr Stephen Gold, who spent his youth with the army in India and later became an honorary consultant dermatologist to the army, still practises in Harley Street. He says: "Treatment may change but foot inspection remains of paramount importance. Infection usually starts between the fourth or fifth toes, but if neglected an acute



inflammatory condition develops, blisters and pustules may form and soon spread over the feet and legs. Similar infections can occur in other sweaty areas, under the arms or in the groin. For instance, nail care is particularly important. Heat, humidity, sweating and occlusion all favour the growth of fungi, yeasts, and other microbes."

Lt Gaselee's troop has advantages denied to those in Kipling's time. Gone is Whitefield's ointment, potassium permanganate and Castellani's paint, now fungal infections can be treated with imidazole or triazole derivatives, either used as creams, ointments or powders. Severe fungal skin infections can be treated with Sporanox by mouth, secondary bacterial infections with antibiotics, and nails painted with Trosyl. One word of warning to Lt Gaselee from Dr Gold: "The feet of some otherwise virile and healthy, but unfortunate, men also smell — not from infection but from the production of a smelly fatty acid released when their skin is broken down by sweat."

Left behind at the menopause



Being left-handed may prove a bonus for a batsman playing village cricket, and a disadvantage for those who want to borrow golf clubs, but these are relatively unimportant considerations compared with some of the effects it can have in medicine. Epilepsy and congenital heart disease, are, for instance, more common in the left-handed but, in compensation, left-handers are also more likely to be gifted ball game players or mathematicians.

Dr Chris Barclay, writing in the medical journal *Medical*, has revealed the effect of left-handedness in obstetrics and gynaecology. Last year he reported that in a study of Canadian college entrants it was found that the mothers of those who were left-handed were more likely to have had complications during delivery and to be older. More recently he has studied left-handedness in relation to the menopause, and has based his conclusions largely on the research work of Dr L.E. Lundy, published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. Dr Lundy has shown that in a group of 371 American women, the mean age of the menopause in women who were ambidextrous was 40.7, in those who were left-handed 42.3, and those who were right-handed 47.3 years.

No left-handed or ambidextrous woman was still menstruating at the age of 51, but several of the right-handed were doing so at 56. The age of the menopause is significant because the earlier the menopause in a woman, the more likely she is to suffer from cardiovascular disease, such as coronary thrombosis, and osteoporosis (thinning of the bones) in later life.

Bernard Levin, page 14

A lifetime in the theatres

BREATHING SPACE
Bertice Reading

I'M THE type of person who, when something goes wrong, immediately goes to the doctor to find out about it. Maybe it's because of all the operations I've had. I started out with the tonsillectomy and appendectomy, then every ten years I came up with fibroids. In Belgium, in 1976, I had an operation on my pancreas and they did a complete changing around of my stomach, putting things in different places. I was always afraid that if I had an accident they would spend hours putting everything back in the right order, which would kill me!

After that operation people sent so many flowers it looked like I was being buried. Then I got a phone call from a man in a town where I was due to sing. He wanted to arrange an ambulance, nurse and doctor to bring me there, so the people could look in through the window and see me. It's really sad, it's just something about being in show-business, they take it that you're shamming. Then I went to Australia, got off the plane desperately ill and found that the gall bladder had done its number, so that was operated on over there.

After the pancreas operation I had five more, one after the other, every six months, and that was the most disturbing thing that's happened in my life, very painful.

I've been smoking since I was 15 years old. I don't keep track of how many I smoke a day, but it's enough. I think it eases the stress. I gave up twice, once for eight months, once for 11. Then I thought: "I really like to smoke." I don't go into pubs and drink and, at that time, before I got married, I wasn't having sex. So there I was, not drinking, not having sex, and not really eating, because although I'm a large woman I'm not a big eater. And I thought: "What's the use of all the work if you're not doing anything to make you happy?" I like to smoke.

I had four cups of tea this morning, and I drink tea throughout the day. Sometimes I fix Phillip, my husband,



"Although I'm a large woman I'm not a big eater". American singer Bertice Reading

some sausages and eggs. I used to eat that with him, but I don't any more because sausages are too fatty and don't make me feel good. I have to be very careful with my stomach. I can go the whole day on a peanut butter sandwich: one piece of bread and lots of peanut butter. You get busy, the phone is ringing, things are happening. I forget to eat.

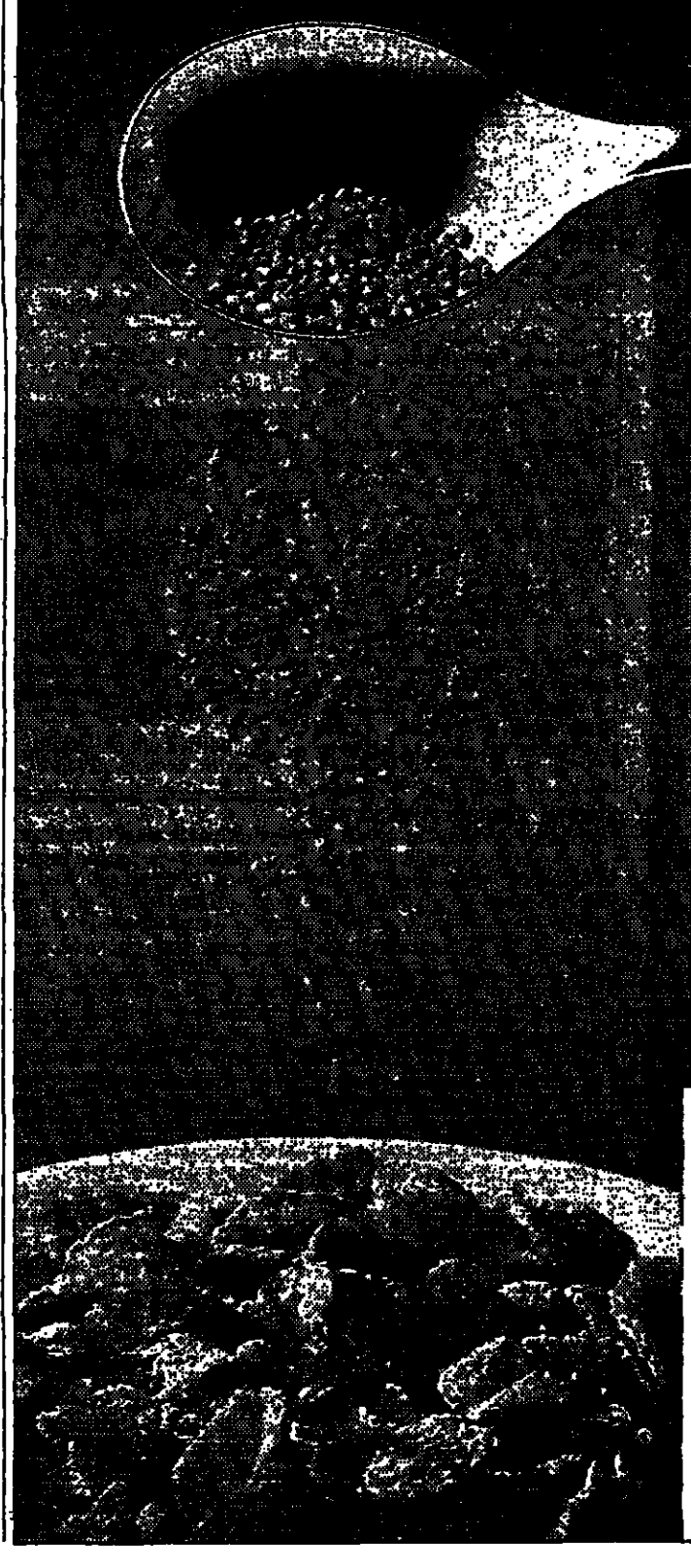
When I was growing up my mother forced me into eating so much food that my system really doesn't need it now. We used to get pancakes and sausages, pork chops and potatoes — for breakfast.

About eight at night I'll have a grilled steak, boiled potato and some sort of green thing — peas, sprouts or spinach. I don't have a sweet tooth, but I really love sweet potato pie. I can go overboard with that, but I don't make it too often.

Three times a week I do body control with Peneapple Studios. It's the best exercise I've ever done, like Callanpinck — it tightens everything and tones up the

Interview by Pamela Novick
© Times Newspapers Ltd 1991

Why make a meal out of curbing cholesterol?



There's no easy way to keep cholesterol under control. Diets can work but they need perseverance.

High cholesterol levels have no simple answer, but Centrin Lecithin taken in conjunction with a sensible diet could help maintain a healthy heart.

Lecithin is a natural emulsifier which occurs in the body to break up fats like cholesterol. Centrin Lecithin, made from Soya beans, is a pure and concentrated way to increase your body's lecithin levels.

A few teaspoons of Centrin Lecithin on its own or sprinkled on food could help prevent the build-up of cholesterol.

What more could a healthy heart want?



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Court of Camelot by Alamein

Michael Wright on a frivolous Matter of England done up in modern khaki

Behold a tattered sign outside one of the bookshops in London's Charing Cross Road: *Save Money and Trees - Buy Second Hand*. Yea, what cataclysmic eco-destruction is daily being wrought by us who purchase shining new tomes of literary fiction? Does each ping of a bookshop doorbell toll the death-knell of yet another tree? How much sap is on our hands? Hard to say exactly. Presumably some of it must be on the hands of novelists themselves. We have yet to see European Community fiction quotas aimed at the prolific or the prolix; at those who write too many good books or simply stuff them too full of words.

This novel, completed just before Donald Barthelme's death in 1989, is admirably small, reflecting the author's undoubted flair for short stories. Yet while Barthelme's brevity may save the odd tree, it won't save the reader any dosh; Secker's has thinly justified charging full-whack by spreading the work over 151 pages, with the widely spaced text languishing between margins as wide as matchboxes. Visually, the layout is attractive, but it does Barthelme no favours; for all the vivid inventiveness of his narrative, the novel is essentially lightweight and - like a tattoo on the buttock of an admiral - seems the more frivolous for being set in so portentous a frame.

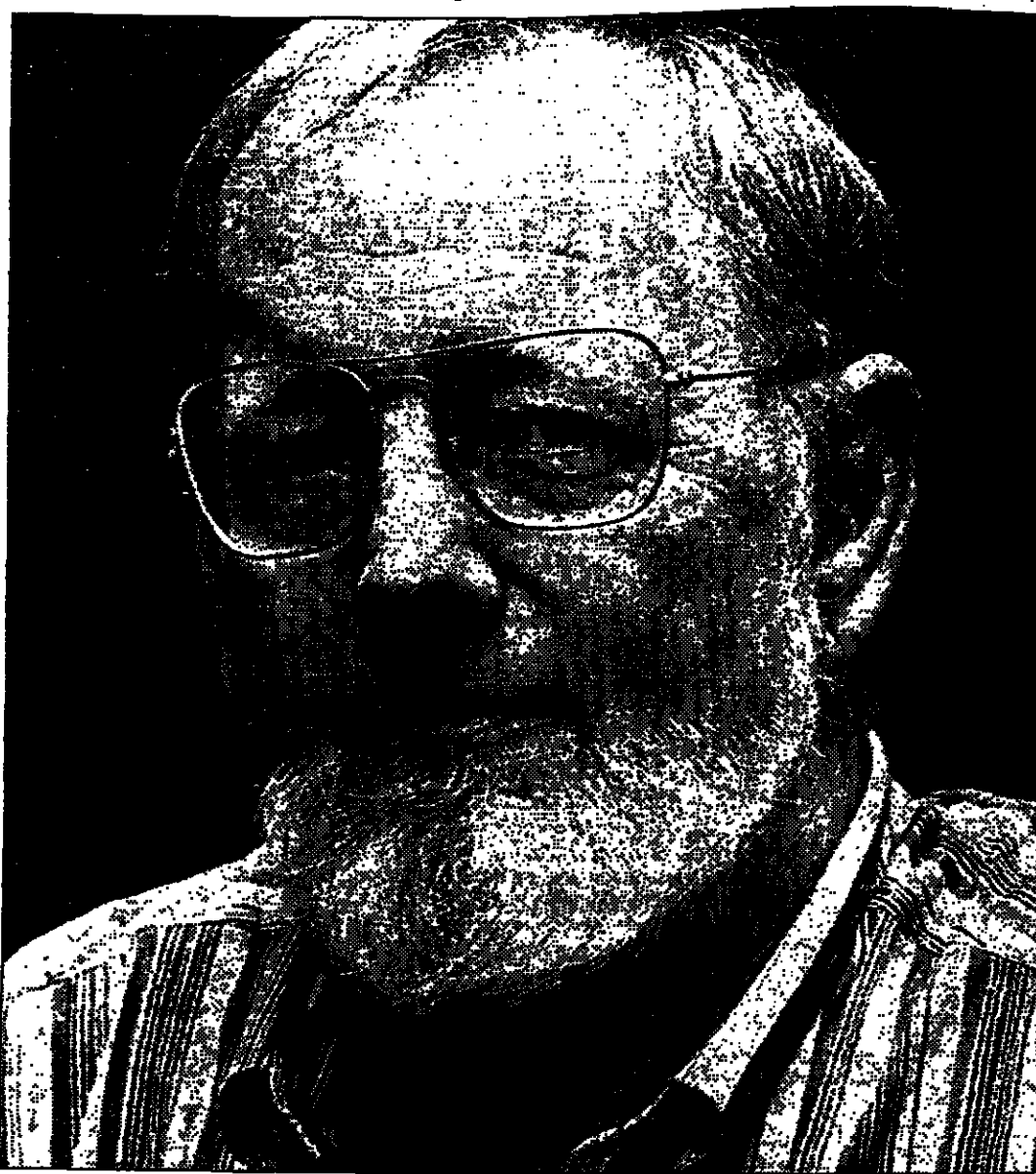
Unfortunately, this is not a wonderful time for frivolous books, let alone for the appearance of a jockey novel in which old King Arthur and his knights are discovered doing battle with the Nazis during the darkest hours of the second world war. Or at least, would be discovered doing battle, were they not too busy brasting each other's pates, writhing in hurt, and falling in swoons; too busy discussing damels and dragons, or avidly listening to Lord Haw Haw and Ezra Pound

broadcasting their ghastly propaganda from Germany; too busy worrying about the possible size of their obituaries in *The Times*, to the extent that Lancelot accidentally leaves his second-best mace in the men's room of the Lamb and Flag. *Quel horreur!*

The synthesis of distant myth and recent history is attractively handled, and enriched by the gloopy dollops of pastiche knight-speak that spatter the text. Rather than shifting gently (and fashionably) between narrative strands in different ages, Barthelme shakes up a wicked cocktail in which the mythic heroes of Malory et al are splurged directly into the "classical" historical context. But while there is an attempt to explore the anachronisms of chivalry and kingship in the modern world (and specifically, in modern warfare, where the quest for the grail becomes identified with the quest to invent the atomic bomb), there is little solid kick to the book; it fizzles and froths for a time and then - whup! - it's gone.

One is reminded, perhaps, of a clattering fairground ride; of a few thrilling seconds of speed and noise and movement which give way, when the ride abruptly stops, to a sense of anti-climax and of somehow having been short-changed. This novel never lacks pace or inventiveness, but it lacks force and depth so that - despite a veneer of robustness - its effect is as insubstantial as a precision bombing raid carried out with snowballs.

Thirty-nine snowballs, to be precise, since the novel is divided into 39 little "chapters" of a few pages each. Each section consists almost entirely of direct speech, reported in the past, but often introduced by a jigger of present-tense scene-setting, thus: "Guinevere in London, at the palace. Sitting in a chair buttering an apple." Or, "Lancelot whanging away at the helm of the Yellow



Donald Barthelme, successor to Marlowe, Tennyson, Mark Twain, and others, is bringing back Arthur

Knights. The snapshot immediacy of such micro-descriptions sets in context each bout of conversation between knights and ladies. In six contrasting sections, breathless stichomythia is used to provide a vivid commentary upon live action (battles, bathtimes, etc.), as two unnamed witnesses describe what they can see, with all the excitement of a

pair of incontinent children watching a royal event through cardboard periscopes. So much dialogue is the root of the immediacy, as well as the instability, of the novel. Barthelme, like Joyce's *Araby*, does his best to refine himself out of existence, and the reader is never bullied or tricked into sharing a particular viewpoint. But the danger

of relying upon direct speech alone is that blandness tends to creep in, especially when each character is little more than a shallow cipher. *The King* is a remarkably "open" text, and refreshing for being so. Yet it is also frustratingly insubstantial; small and imperfectly formed. Save money and trees, then, buy it second-hand.

Something nasty in Action Man

HORROR

Anne Billson

COLD FIRE

By Dean R. Koontz

Headline £12.95

BARELY a month goes by, it seems, without publication of yet another Dean R. Koontz novel, with yet another of those interchangeable generic titles that cast so little light on the subject matter within: *Midnight*, *Whispers*, *Lightning*, *Phantoms*, and so on. Many of the more recent volumes are in fact reissues, but Koontz nevertheless rivals Stephen King for proficiency. Though he does not share King's natural-born storytelling abilities (who doesn't?), his name has come to be recognised as the guarantee of a good, solid read, and he has a loyal following among horror fans. He is fond of Action Man heroes who form touchingly old-fashioned relationships with plucky, wilful heroines, and though he may be dealing in the standard horror currency of charmed corpses and death-dealing teeth and tentacles, one always senses that his worldview is charitable and ultimately reassuring. These are essentially comfy chills; right will prevail. I found his latest - *Cold Fire* - his most enjoyable book to date. Plucky, wilful Holly, investigative journalist, is intrigued by Jim, a mysterious Action Man type who roars around America rescuing small boys and girls from drunk drivers, child pornographers, and plane crashes. Is he Superman, or an agent of God, or something more sinister? Just when you think the plot is degenerating into drapery, Koontz inserts a twist that sets it back on the right track.

Renegades, by Shaun Hutson (Macdonald, £12.95). You couldn't get much more of a contrast to Koontz than Hutson, king of the kill-a-minute pulp nasty, and the man who gave us the all-time classic horror title *Shog* ("they stime, they oaze, they kilt"). *Renegades* mixes the IRA, counter-terrorism, and Gilles de Rais into a lethal cocktail of gun-worshipping ultra-violence, prefaced by quotes from Alfred Lord Tennyson and Iron Maiden, and with a supernatural manifestation tacked on to justify the horror tag. The prose rips along at a lightning pace until someone is shot, when

it switches to lovingly detailed slow motion: people don't just die, they disintegrate into "gobbets of lung tissue" or "slops of brain". The most extraordinary thing about Hutson's books, however, is the complete absence of optimism, the complete absence of characters and sentimentality: they make Jim Thompson's look like something out of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. This is just as well; so horrible are the things that happen to them, it would be unbearable if they were people you cared about.

Torture Garden, by Octave Mirbeau (*Dedalus*, £6.99). Oscar Wilde recommended *Torture Garden* to Frank Harris, describing it as "revolving... a sort of grey adder". This author is probably best known for *Diary of a Chambermaid*, and some 90 years after first publication, this study of colonialism and corruption still packs a nasty wallop. En route to the Orient to avoid a scandal, the French narrator takes as his mistress an upper-class English woman who introduces him to the *Jardin des Supplices* in China, where the exotic flowers mingle with the bodies of dead or dying criminals, and where civilised society is exposed as a hypocritical sham. A decadent masterpiece.

The Place, by T. M. Wright (*Gollancz*, £3.99). Eight-year-old Greta is her family's only hope when her mother and brother are kidnapped by a maniac in the woods, because Greta shares the madman's ability to retreat into a land of the imagination. This is neither as spooky nor as satisfying as the same writer's *Manhattan Ghost Story*, and the abrupt ending smacks of author-racing-to-meet-the-deadline, but Wright again proves himself a stylist.

Witch of small-town America

Andrew Sinclair

SEVENTH HEAVEN

By Alice Hoffman

Virago, £12.99

FRANCESCA

By Roger Scruton

Sinclair-Stevenson, £13.95

HERO

By I. Allan Sealy

Secker & Warburg, £13.99

THE POP LARKIN

CHRONICLES

By H. E. Bates

Michael Joseph, £15.99

WE are in heaven, Seventh Heaven, when reading this novel, which breathes of the want below the surface of things. In Hemlock Street 21 years ago, desire never came alone. It was twisted round a core of dissatisfaction. It was found in a rubber glove or a pear wedge mashed for a baby or the sleeve of a black leather jacket. And then things began to happen for no reason at all. Alice Hoffman is the alchemist of magical realism. She is the philosopher's stone of small town America. She writes of good girls who keep their fingers crossed as they sleep, and of boys who suffer the terrible freedom of a summer night. The owners of the houses on Hemlock Street know the two rules - mind your own business and keep up your lawn. But the arrival of the divorced Nora Silk with her children stimulates the nightmares of the place.

The local police officer is obsessed by Nora and is transfigured into understand-

ing. Her child becomes a tiny Houdini, and she makes from candlewax a mannequin of his bully at school. Interweaving the stories of the families from the homes along the street, Alice Hoffman creates a

patchwork quilt of neighbours that reminds of a lost stitch. Since *The Spoon River Anthology* and *Under Milk Wood*, this little necromancy has rarely been better performed.

Francesca is about love in spite of class. The resolution is death. Roger Scruton's hero Colin is one of those acquiescent types, who drifts to the tide of the needs of women. This absolves him from moral blame, but alas, he has scruples. His teacher father is a throwback from William Morris, while he loves the rich heiress of Barrington Hall. She crucifies him upon the rack of class, which is described as wealth and power, indifference and domination. All of which Colin dots upon.

The suffering that Colin undergoes also is a matter of class. To the rich, solitide can be a luxury package, but Colin possesses the secret of loneli-

ness, and he cannot pass it on to Francesca. Their affair is doomed by her eccentric and decadent friends, who speak as if Pirandello has given them words - "We're all fictions, characters in search of an author." Even Colin thinks that his liaison with Francesca is only a cooperative fiction, a form of her *nostalgie de la boue*. But the surprise and triumph of this novel of manners is the ending, when a last letter from Francesca drains the shallows of the hero. She has suffered from the Thing, which is more than social status. It is the knowledge that she must die. Beside that, all is fiction, indeed.

Recently we have looked to the Indians to rework our language - to the West Indians and the original ones. Here is a curio of words in the casserole of a Bombay Movie. I. Allan Sealy presents himself

as the dog and slave of a film superstar who becomes prime minister. In America, Abraham Lincoln was killed by an actor in the theatre. But in India, they wish to repay the old, the bad debt. They have more film-stars changed into politicians than anywhere else on earth. And soon it will be television stars - now the true opium of the masses - becoming ministers. Yet it is a strange, retrograde metamorphosis, as if a butterfly should turn into a caterpillar.

This story of Bombay and Delhi, "of film glamour and khadi, homespun, power", is a riot of regret of the Raj and the talkies. The zero who becomes the hero sees that his Karmascope repairs the hearts of the people. "For the price of a film ticket you can have a new soul." When he becomes a politician, he forgets how near the British Raj still is,

and he orders "two pink gins and a rum and croak". Between the new lingo and the old, *Hero* chatters. It ends with a coup and the death of the great man. Its passage is a fountain of strange syntax.

Yet television has become all, even as we now know - in time of war. But it is not always the narcosis of the people. It may be the resurrection of the comic. H. E. Bates is one of the finer forgotten writers of the second world war, when his *Flying Officer X* stories did much to make the myth of the First of the Few. Many a pot-boiler later, he found his true talent in *The Pop Larkin Chronicles*. Inside a squadron leader manqué, there was a local Falstaff trying to belch his way out.

A television series has provoked the reprinting of these tales of village yeast and scrumpiness, including the inefable *The Darling Buds of May*. Occasionally, the box leads us back to the better page.

The father of the blockbuster

ARTHUR HATLEY

THE EVENING NEWS

The electrifying new bestseller from the author of AIRPORT and HOTEL

Stand up for bastards

HISTORICALS

Philip Toomey

TILL THE DAY GOES DOWN

By Judith Leman-Smith

Hamish Hamilton, £14.99

his death at Senlac? Gytha had the alternative of going into a nunnery, but escaped to her uncle, King Svein of Denmark. Beautiful and intelligent, she was not of royal blood, Harold having been elected in succession to Edward the Confessor. She was dispatched to Kiev, Russia, by King Svein's new wife, who felt she might do for her brother, Grand Prince Vladimir. Wives were not much regarded in Russia, and she could if necessary be stuck away in a terem, the Russian equivalent of purdah. A pleasant book, founded on the ancestors of our royal family.



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By Judith Leman-Smith
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Games kids recall

CHILDREN

Brian Alderson

CAN I PLAY QUEENIE?

By Jill Paton Walsh

Illustrated by Jolyne Knox

The Bodley Head, £4.99

IN QUEENIE, Jill Paton Walsh has attempted in a 28-page picture book to revive a playground game within an almost modestly up-to-date narrative. Young Gary is troubled about his pregnant mum, and whether the baby will be a boy or a girl (first modish theme). He then finds himself joining the girls-only game of "Queenie" (second modish theme), and within this little story of boy-joins-girls the author and illustrator show how the game is played. ("Queenie, Queenie, who has the ball?" - remember?) Thus the child-reader gets a jeans-and-sneakers reintroduction to his/her rightful heritage.

I have no idea if *Queenie* will be intruding upon a still-retained tribal knowledge, or if it will serve to bring back a forgotten custom; but Jill Paton Walsh is clearly out to do some proselytising for Tradition. From time to time mothers or grandmothers will reminisce: "That's funny, said Gemma's mother, 'our Wolf didn't go to Devonshire, he went to Lancashire.'" But of course, either place will do, as the benign godparents to this series - Iona and Peter Opie - will confirm.

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CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Gangsters who talk a good fight

Geoff Brown reviews
Miller's Crossing,
To Sleep with Anger,
I Hired a Contract,
Killer, Australia, The
Adventures of Ford
Fairlane, Men at Work
and *Cold Dog Soup*

In Hollywood terms, 1990 was the year the gangsters leaped back. Borne aloft on a mountain of hype, detective Dick Tracy stalked comic-strip mobsters. Scorsese's *GoodFellas* pounded the mean streets; the Corleone clan gave a farewell performance in *The Godfather Part II*. Not to be outdone, the devilishly clever brothers Coen, Joel and Ethan, released *Miller's Crossing* (18, Cannon Haymarket, Oxford Street), a Prohibition tale with men in coats, guns, and dark-panelled rooms, trapped in a spider's web of deceit. American critics reached for their superlatives, though to these eyes the film seems a mixed blessing.

Nobody, of course, should expect a straight genre piece from the makers of *Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona*. Despite the punches, the dripping blood, the cool-shaved thugs, and the bullet-hole in the victim's forehead, this is no action bonanza. Words dominate: smartly packaged in serpentine sentences, curt repartee, and a rapid-fire slang (partly invented, partly culled from the pages of Dashiell Hammett): "Drift, small guy," "Not so fast there, kaputnik," the Coens' script is a masterpiece of Hardboiled Baroque.

But words are not enough: there must be characters to hook an audience's interest. *Miller's Crossing* boasts a bright, squawking secondary bunch. Leo, the paternalistic boss (Albert Finney), Caspar, the blustering rival gangster (John Polito), Bernie Bernbaum, a smiling weasel in hot water (John Turturro) - "Not a bad guy," we are told, "if looks, brains and personality don't count."

Yet the central figure of Leo's henchman, Tom, played suavely by Gabriel Byrne, is madly intriguing. Secretly in love with Leo's mistress (Marcia Gay Harden, Bernie's sister), he shifts allegiances between gangs. This adds to the plot's dizzy spiral, but his cryptic behaviour and dark eyes give little to an audience hungry for clarity.

With its cipher of a hero, its tortuous dialogue, and its brooding visuals, *Miller's Crossing* becomes almost an abstract distillation of the gangster genre. Assorted scenes amuse, chill and flabbergast: a machine-gun ballet to the strains of "Danny Boy"; a boy and his dog staring with awe at a dead hood; exchanges between Tom and Bernie, laced with sexual overtones. But nothing banishes the feeling of a self-conscious exercise; a film hemmed in by quotation marks.

For cinema imbued with warmth and ease, there is only one choice this week: *To Sleep with Anger* (12, Metro) tells its black director Charles Burnett - known to connoisseurs for two earlier features,



Inscrutable mobster hero and his mate: Gabriel Byrne and Marcia Gay Harden in *Miller's Crossing*

Killer of Sheep and *My Brother's Wedding* - into the frontline of American independent film-makers. Burnett combines a rare talent for realistic narrative with a distinct poetic sense. Scorching the surface of his characters (a troubled family deep in the Los Angeles suburban jungle) and you find folklore, superstition, Deep South witchery: the most normal domestic events - a dropped egg, a sweeping broom - signify something rich and strange.

The film's magic has an agent provocateur, Harry: a rosy, chucklesome family friend, magnificently played by Danny Glover, who moves in and spreads bad fortune with every smile. Papa comes down with a mysterious ailment, Mama gets injured in a fight between their two sons; a raffish crowd of Harry's old friends dog the kitchen, playing cards and summoning up sinister memories. By the end, the family can only be saved from perdition if Harry can be persuaded to leave.

Burnett pursues a relaxed narrative tempo that enables characters and actors, whether angels or devils, to etch themselves into the audience's hearts. Glover's demon cuts no Jack Nicholson capers: these are real people, affectionately drawn, none more so than the mother, powerfully portrayed by Mary Alice. And for all the play with black folklore, this is no black ghetto film: the family woes which Harry exacerbates (material greed, sibling rivalry) soar above ethnic bounda-

ries. If you believe in cinema with a poetic punch and a human face, do not miss *To Sleep with Anger*.

Aki Kaurismäki (see interview, right) came to prominence with mordant films rooted in the society of his native Finland. When he travels abroad, his scalp becomes blunted. *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, shot in the United States, framed itself away with juvenile humour; likewise, *I Hired a Contract Killer* (15, Camden Plaza, Electric), shot in England, rarely fulfils its promise.

The style remains largely un-

London streets and Léaud's displaced person. But once the plot proper gets launched - black-comedy on Ealing lines, involving life-affirming romance with a flower-seller (Margi Clarke, from *Letter to Brezhnev*) - Léaud's plight loses resonance. What began as a piquant variation on Kaurismäki's themes of death, despondency, and cultural dislocation ends in buffoonery.

Further cultural dislocations arrive in Jean-Jacques Andrien's *Australis* (National Film Theatre), made in 1989, where Jeremy Irons - oozing British reserve -

(12) at the NFT until February 27.

Elsewhere, distributors continue to dredge up Hollywood sludge. The *Adventures of Ford Fairlane* (18, Cannon Oxford Street), directed by Renny Harlin, was planned as the flashy starring debut of Andrew Dice Clay, a rude stand-up comic. Everything was set: the merchandise, the concert film, the future projects. Then the movie flopped, and Clay's studio, Twentieth Century Fox, backed away from its star. Alas, the movie remains a frenzied spoof thriller set in the Los Angeles music industry, larded with noise, four-letter words, and plugs for Ford cars. If Marjans ever wanted proof of our advanced intelligence, this would not be the film to show them.

There is more. *Men at Work* (12, Prince Charles), the brainchild of young Emilio Estevez, who writes, directs, and co-stars with brother Charlie Sheen, offers the idiotic story of two anarchic garbage collectors who tumble across a dead politician. Calamities and lavatory jokes pile up; good fun for sniggering schoolboys, but nobody else.

Alan Metzer's *Cold Dog Soup* (15, Odeon Mezzanine), meanwhile, presents the desperate comic spectacle of a lustful young stockbroker, a voracious girl, and a seedy taxi-driver (Randy Quaid, top-billed), spending a manic night trying to get rid of a dead dog. Its best chance would be with late-night audiences bludgeoned into silliness by drink.

CINEMA: INTERVIEW

Dislocations of a sentimental man

Stephanie Billen meets the eccentric Finnish film-maker, Aki Kaurismäki

Aki Kaurismäki sits hunched over two gin-and-tonics. The Finnish film-maker is being difficult again. He has already changed the venue for this interview - from hotel, to pub, to Sobo Brasserie. Now he seems to have gone off talking.

"When we get married I tell you everything," he says. But he perks up sufficiently to give a terse verdict on every film he has made. "Basically I hate them all. None of them is the masterpiece which I always try to make. I never succeed because I am unbalanced."

Fans of the director's ironic, off-beat style would doubtless disagree. Past works such as *Hamlet Goes Business*, *Ariel*, *The Match Factory Girl* and *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, have always offered something out of the ordinary: a Hamlet who works for a rubber-duck company; the trials and tribulations of a Lapland ex-miner; a rock 'n' roll road-movie featuring a dreadful Soviet band.

His latest picture, *I Hired a Contract Killer* (reviewed left), is about a bewildered Frenchman living in London, who organises his own murder after being sacked from Her Majesty's newly privatised Waterworks. Falling in love with a flower-seller saves him from despair but not necessarily from the man with a contract to kill him.

The film, starring *A Letter to Brezhnev*'s Margi Clarke and François Truffaut's favourite actor, Jean-Pierre Léaud, is Kaurismäki's first to have been set in Britain, but you could be forgiven for mistaking this cheerless location for somewhere in Eastern Europe. "The camera was in London so it looks like London. Maybe London is East Europe, but it's not my problem," says the director.

He likes London as it is, or how he thinks it is ("I hope nobody will change it," he says) and it is true that Whitechapel, Bethnal Green and Stoke Newington cemetery are lovingly photographed. This is a romantic film, about which even Kaurismäki finds it hard to be cynical. "I made a film called *Shadows in Paradise* five years ago. It was a film I put all my heart in. I find my heart again for *Contract Killer*. It is supposed to be a film which is happy. The problem is my sadness comes through, even if I don't want it."

The prospect of tracing some of the film's influences fills him with sighs. "To answer this I have to tell you the whole story of my childhood, this film I saw in 1965, that film in 1967... I am from a generation which saw too many films." If pressed, he singles out a Henry Cass film, *Last Holiday*, about a man

who fills his dying days with an enjoyable last fling, but *Contract Killer* defies comparison. "I tried to make an Ealing kind of film, but it seemed to be not an Ealing kind of film," he says, as if the picture had a life of its own.

In reality, no Kaurismäki work ever escapes the director's firm grasp. He describes his treatment of actors thus: "I'm very easy, I never shout. I am very nice and polite. Except they have to do what I say. I don't give them any freedom to create something of their own. I don't let anyone be an artist."

He is used to working with his own Finnish specialty actors, but for *Contract Killer* he took on an unlikely ensemble including British character actor Kenneth Colley as the killer, and, for cameo roles, rock musicians Joe Strummer and Nicky Tesco, and French cinema veteran, Serge Reggiani.

But it was the hiring of the

leading pair, Margi Clarke and his hero, Jean-Pierre Léaud, which probably gave him most pleasure.

Margi Clarke is an old friend, who worked on his brother, Mika's films: "She was the best female actor I knew in London, or in England, or in the world." As for Léaud: "I've liked his acting for years. When I made my first film as an actor I was imitating him. I used to look like him when I was young: 10,000 points ago."

His next film, an adaptation of *La Bohème* set in Paris, has no French actors and will be played by his usual Finnish troupe. "It is in French and I don't speak French," he says, with a shrug. "So maybe it will be a comedy."

No doubt he will come to view it with both hatred and love, for he has a sentimental streak as well as a bitter one. "I have forgiven all my films, in a way. They are my children. And I always try my best."

● *Contract Killer* opens at the Camden Plaza (071-485 2443) and Electric Cinema, Portobello Road (071-792 2020) tomorrow.



Kaurismäki: "I don't let anyone be an artist"

This is no action bonanza, words dominate: the script is a masterpiece of Hardboiled Baroque. But words are not enough

altered: plain, crisp camerawork; bleak locales; deadpan delivery of laconic lines, often steeped in parody. Since Kaurismäki's lead actor is a marooned Frenchman, Jean-Pierre Léaud, awkward phrasing pushes the dialogue into absurdity. "Where I come from, we eat places like this for breakfast," he barks at the habitués of the Docklands bar where he takes out a contract on his own life after being made redundant and failing to end his misery himself.

In early scenes Kaurismäki and his regular cameraman Timo Salminen elixir slithering shots of decrepit

stalks the screen as a Belgian-born wool merchant living in Australia. "Beast lamb!" he cries, without conviction. In Belgium, during the Fifties, the family wool business faces hard times. Andrien subtly depicts the pangs of homecoming and expatriation, yet cannot make this a drama to shake the rafters.

This is a film of immaculate surfaces: bourgeois furnishings arranged just so, classy photography juggling Australia's golden glare with Belgium's mists. Whatever lies behind remains hidden, trapped by Andrien's reticence and the plot's small focus. There are screenings

at the NFT until February 27.

Elsewhere, distributors continue to dredge up Hollywood sludge. The *Adventures of Ford Fairlane* (18, Cannon Oxford Street), directed by Renny Harlin, was planned as the flashy starring debut of Andrew Dice Clay, a rude stand-up comic. Everything was set: the merchandise, the concert film, the future projects. Then the movie flopped, and Clay's studio, Twentieth Century Fox, backed away from its star. Alas, the movie remains a frenzied spoof thriller set in the Los Angeles music industry, larded with noise, four-letter words, and plugs for Ford cars. If Marjans ever wanted proof of our advanced intelligence, this would not be the film to show them.

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The full picture

THOUGH there was a major show of Toulouse-Lautrec graphics at the Royal Academy two years ago, there has not been a show in England covering the whole range of his work for many years. So it is welcome news that the South Bank is to stage a Lautrec show at the Hayward Gallery from October until next January. The exhibition, the largest of its kind since the early Sixties, will undoubtedly cash in on the appeal of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. The Renoir show at the Hayward in 1985 broke all attendance records and if the Lautrec show repeats that success, it will not only cover its £500,000 cost, but will subsidise the South Bank exhibition, 90 Lautrec paintings and 60 drawings, prints and posters will be included.

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EXHIBITION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

How pleasant to view Mr Lear

Andrew Gibbon Williams on the fresh appeal of a Victorian writer's watercolours



"The Fortifications at Palaua Froulon, Corfu", pen and ink and watercolour, 1845, by Edward Lear

Like a serious modern actor doomed to perpetual identification with a popular comic role, Edward Lear will never get away from *The Owl and the Pussycat*. Few know that he began life as a zoological illustrator specialising in parrots, taught the young Queen Victoria to draw, and produced more than 15,000 drawings. He was one of the great travel-writers of his day and could vamp away to his friend Tennyson's poems on the piano. In short, he was the quintessential Victorian polymath.

The tenacious creativity and "professional" travelling of 19th-century artists never ceases to amaze. As a young man Lear followed convention and set himself up in rooms within spitting distance of the Piazza di Spagna in Rome and proceeded to "do" Italy, as he put it. That, however, was just the beginning. Lear reeked up Albanian mountains for the sake of views which can still only be enjoyed by masochists. Although benefiting from good social entries, he often preferred to "rough it" and by the 1870s scarcely a nook or cranny of the Levant had not been described by his pencil.

Lear, the painter, was long out of fashion; but in 1928 Sir Steven Runciman, the historian of Byzantium and the Crusades, saw a watercolour in a bookshop and bought it for eight guineas. Over the years he has built up a choice collection and now he has lent it to the National Gallery of Scotland.

Sir Steven, who set up the British Council in Athens after the war, had spent many of his 87 years working in the region Lear favoured, so Hugh MacAndrew, the gallery's keeper of prints and drawings, had the bright idea of persuading the collector to contribute his own

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Green fare ruined by flummery

THEATRE

The Corn is Green

EMILYN Williams died four years ago, his reputation as a dramatist denigrated by years of silence from him and neglect by the theatre. If any play is likely to rehabilitate him, *The Corn is Green* is surely it, not just because it is his most anthologised, but because it was closest to his creative heart. It was his own intellectual self-discovery he was celebrating, his own teacher he wanted publicly to thank.

Perhaps he should have done so more directly, and trusted his audience to sustain interest in the education of Emlyn Williams, alias Morgan Evans, by the redoubtable Miss Cooke, alias Miss Moffat. As it was, he surrounded that relationship with so much conventional flummery it became almost invisible; and there is little that Matthew Francis's revival at Greenwich can do to sharpen it, especially as he has cast the unsuitable Patricia Routledge as Moffat.

Routledge is a fine, robust actress, and there is no reason why she should precisely recreate Miss Cooke, "absorbed, awkward and vibrant" as Williams called her. Yet astuteness and intellectual intensity are what the written role demands and what she lacks. There is something impressively tweedy about her as she stomps round the stage, a blunt, jolly woman always more likely to launch into lacrosse than an analysis of Schopenhauer. She gets the character's energy and un-

mentality, but when she must rhapsodise about learning ("The printed page, what is it? One of the miracles of all time"), she sounds soupy and implausible, a games mistress out of her depth on parents' day.

Meanwhile, the play's innate inadequacies are becoming evident. There is only one thread that matters. Miss Moffat, having started her hedge-school in the Welsh valleys, discovers a pupil of great potential in the ignorant young miner Morgan Evans, and duly tutors him to Oxford. But Williams clearly did not think this provided the evening with enough tension. So he manufactured some, and did not make it real.

First, there is the local squire, Arthur Cox's performance a podgy human sea-lion, trumpeting his importance to all around. He is briefly looks as if he might destroy the "unwomanly" Miss Moffat and her "uppity" school. But there is that dramatically dreary thing, a warm heart, beneath the gruff exterior. All Routledge has to do is smugger and, with ludicrous speed, the squire becomes Evans's fiercest champion. His hostility was only a ruse to keep the audience on tenterhooks.

Next, there is the even more transparent ruse of introducing a sexual threat in the form of a siren schoolgirl. In Act II she seduces Brendan O'Hea's brooding, truculent Morgan and in Act III tries to ruin his hopes by announcing her pregnancy and demanding marriage. Will she, won't she keep him from Oxford? The resolution of the problem is pretty preposterous, but then the problem is



Morgan Evans (Brendan O'Hea) and Miss Moffat (Patricia Routledge)

self is the stuff of melodrama. Again, the supporting characters, though well enough performed at Greenwich, do little to justify their presence. Paula Jacobs, for instance, cannot conceal that Miss Moffat's cook is there to play the jaunty, lovable cockney and provide comic relief. Yet there are moments of misturn, awkwardness, anger and warmth between O'Hea's wary Morgan and, whatever her troubles, Routledge's Moffat that suggest

that there might have been another *Corn is Green*: one that explored the principals' bond more deeply, one that perhaps even showed the discussions on Henry VIII, Burke and God we only hear mentioned. It would have been an unconventional play, no doubt of it, but truer and, I say, more lastingly enjoyable.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

MUSICAL

The King and I

Sadler's Wells

THE settings glitter with gold paint: gold on the lion dogs flanking the stage, gold pagodas on the painted backdrop glimpsed between fretted columns, golden epaulettes and bangles on the Siamese courtiers. James Hammerstein, son of Oscar II, rightly goes for the sumptuous look in his production: no designer is credited so perhaps the design is also his. He establishes an oriental splendour which is deliberately contrasted with the sober browns of the boat that brings Anna to Bangkok in the opening scene. Western propriety, scientifically advanced and morally certain, meets the gorgeous East. Oriental behaviour proves to be quite as proper in its fashion, but Siam is scientifically backward and simply not democratic.

Unlike the greater Rodgers & Hammerstein musical, *South Pacific*, this tale of a Welsh schoolmistress improving the tone of the court of King Rama IV treats the exotic East as a place solely in need of Western culture. Hammerstein's patronising book taints

the evening's pleasure and a Sharper staging would improve matters negligibly. James Hammerstein's remains determined old-fashioned, but then the entire plot is caught in a time-warped to impress an English diplomat the court beauties must wear crinolines. There is nothing to be done with such embarrassments be-



The King and I: Koshiro Matsumoto IX and Susan Hampshire

cause they are the substance of the show.

What *The King and I* gloriously does contain is seven or eight unforgettable numbers. The sweet melodies of "I Have Dreamed" and "We Kiss in a Shadow" have lodged in the memory for years, and it is good to learn, from its setting in the show, why the classiest-time lovers must kiss in the shade.

Anna is Broadway's eternal schoolmarm: bossy, fiercely democratic, but moved to tears by the entreaties of tiny children. Susan Hampshire, an astonishingly youthful figure still, brings a winning charm to the role; her singing voice is charged with character, and she can introduce a tremor into her speaking voice when the audience's tear ducts are to be activated.

The Japanese actor Koshiro Matsumoto IX looks grandly noble, but until his moment of despair late in the show gives a curiously unconvincing performance. This is true of the production as a whole.

JEREMY KINGSTON

down, and to hear Anna's introduction to "Hello, Young-Lovers". This is generally omitted from concert versions, but adds background to her character by disclosing why she must sympathise with anybody who falls in love.

The elegant strains of "Something Wonderful" are beautifully sung by Susan Hampshire, clear and powerful in the high notes, almost purring in the lower register. The singing in the show is admirable, though the orchestra is heavy on the brass, and the production has mastered the curse of bad tone caused by body mikes.

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JEREMY KINGSTON

DANCE

Romeo and Juliet

Grand, Blackpool

FOR Christopher Gable, it is third time lucky with his new production for Northern Ballet Theatre. Two previous attempts at reinterpretation of standard works for the company, *Don Quixote* and *Giselle*, produced many original and ingenious ideas, although the effects were partly punctured by flaws in the dramatic concept. With *Romeo and Juliet* he scores a direct hit.

Gable's aim is twofold: to present the story on an intimate scale, suiting the company and the stages where it appears, and to keep up the pace of the narrative.

He has boldly cut, and occasionally reorganised, Prokofiev's monumental score, eliminating digressive set-pieces and shortening the usual three-hour duration by about 20 minutes.

An example of his treatment at its most drastic and most successful comes at the Capulets' ball, when the lovers' duet is short of its usual interruptions and given in two short bites, one half-way through a shortened solo for Mercutio, the other immediately after it. No time here for the tension to slacken.

In keeping with this approach, Gable maintains attention through sex and violence. The fights are dirty: no polite duelling, but kicks, scratches, many weapons smuggled in, and a lot of gore on the corpses and any character who touches them. The amorous

grapples are equally close and intense: this must be the first balletic treatment where the nurse actually has to drag Romeo and Juliet apart because the family is on its way.

An unusual division of responsibility underlies the production. Gable directs it, with Mollie Guilleford assisting in the dramatic treatment and an Italian choreographer, Massimo Moriconi, providing the dances. Moriconi blends ballet steps with acrobatics and some personal inventions; perhaps he tends to repeat favourite effects too often, but the action moves swiftly and effectively.

Lez Brotherton's setting consists of damaged pillars, doorways, platforms and steps which move quickly into different groupings. A big inscription on one wall has been eroded, as if by time, so that

only just enough letters remain to show that it must originally have read "Amor Vincit Omnia". The cast achieves most of its effects as an ensemble, and Jayne Regan makes a touching and spirited Juliet, William Walker a handsome Romeo, Jeremy Kerridge a rough-and-tumble Mercutio, and Victoria Westall a young and bawdy nurse.

Prokofiev cannot easily be reduced to a complement of 24 players, and there were some squeaky moments, but Francis Rainey's conducting kept his small ensemble going briskly. Julian Grant re-orchestrated the score at its best when he had, as in the carnival scenes of Act II, which sometimes sounded like a drum and a cheeky penny-whistle.

JOHN PERCIVAL

NEW RELEASES

DANCES WITH WOLVES (12): Kevin Costner as the Cheyenne leader who leads his band to the Sioux's way of life. Overweight, though Costner mounts his directorial debut with aplomb. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

DECEMBER BRIDE (12): Inish tale of a strong-willed servant girl, bogged down by a staid atmosphere, but enlivened by Gaelic songs, Celtic folk music and gay inn. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

DUCKTALK: THE MOVIE (12): Disney cartoon feature with Scrooge McDuck, Daffy Duck, and a host of other ducks. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

STAYING TOGETHER (12): This drama of a woman's search for a husband in New York is a well-made, if somewhat predictable, film. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THREE MEN AND A CRIB (12): A comedy of three men who share a crib. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THE CORN IS GREEN (12): A play about a schoolmistress and a young miner. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THE KING AND I (12): A musical about a schoolmistress in Siam. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW (12): A musical about a man who becomes a monster. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated) with the symbol ☐ on release across the country.

THE 400 BLOWS (12): A play about a man who is a sky. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THE GARDEN (12): A play about a man who is a garden. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

THE GRIFFITHS (12): A play about a man who is Griffiths. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

HAVANA (12): A play about a man who is Havana. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

HOCKEY (12): A play about a man who is hockey. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

KINDERGARTEN COP (12): A play about a man who is a kindergarten cop. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

METROPOLITAN (12): A play about a man who is Metropolitan. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

MIRACLE MILE (12): A play about a man who is Miracle Mile. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

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THE NASTY GIRL

Prokofiev's assault on Germany, with Lene Skov as the girl who saves the world. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE (12): A play about a man who is Postcards from the Edge. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE (12): A play about a man who is Reversal of Fortune. (Cannes: Fulham Road (071-370 2833) Shaftesbury Avenue (071-335 8861) Whiteleys (071-222 3333/3334) Warner (071-435 0761).

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WORD-WATCHING

ZOPILOTE

(b) One of the smaller American cultures, the turkey-buzzard or the urubu, from the Mexican Spanish word: "When in search of food, the zopilote ascends to a vast height in the air."

CURULE (c) Like a camp-stool with curved legs, applied to the chair of a higher Roman magistrate, from the Latin *curule*,

CHANNEL 4

10.20 True Stories: Prophet Songs – Ireland's Rebel Priests.
★ CHOICE: A striking documentary from the Irish Republic is built around the experiences of six Roman Catholic priests who became disenchanted with their church and are now priests no longer. They tell their stories themselves, without the gloss of a documentary, and they all stress that their decision to give up their sacerdotal involvement was not an act of protest. But if the tone is low-key the content is often hard-hitting, as when one of the former men of the cloth makes an explicit comparison between the oppression of the church and that of the Ceausescu regime in Romania. As the six see it, the issue is freedom to live a full and untrammelled life, and the church is the obstacle. One of the men puts it: "I have burnt my ecclesiastical brain and I have been liberated." The wives add their comments but there is no reprieve from the church, which continues to take part

11.25 A Week in Politics – Late Sitting
 A weekly news and political programme, *Week in Politics*, at 2.00am

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T4

weather

10.45 **The City Programme.** Airlines in trouble, the mortgage business's repossession problems and the City's regulatory bodies in crisis

11.15 **01.** Includes reviews of the films *Men at Work* and *Miles & Miles*; Crossing; music from *Interzone*; and a look at the history of fashion photography at the V&A

11.45 **Prisoner: Cell Block H.** Drama series set in an Australian women's remand centre

12.00am **Contacts.** A chance for viewers to make contact with other people in the Thames region who share the same interests. Presented by Susy Smith and Trevor Ward

1.10 **The Sunday Times.** 1991 International Bridge Pairs Championship

4.40 **Judith Krantz's IT Takes Manhattan.** Part one of a drama based on Krantz's pot-boiler about the battle for control of a multi-million dollar publishing empire (1)

3.30 **Hardball.** Maverick American cop series

4.30 **America's Top Ten** (1)

● **CHOICE:** In the 17th century smoking was banned by a pope and described by James I of England as 'toothsome, hateful and dangerous'. After the first ban was lifted, it was reinstated in the early 1800s. It returned to official disfavour but the period in between saw puffing unrestrained. An advertisement could unashamedly use the slogan, 'for your throat's sake, smoke', and a promotional film for Capstan could show a doctor giving out cigarettes to calm his patients. This mini-history maintains the inventive standard of the series, packing much into a small space and making serious points amid the *Monty Python* graphics. But as in the other films, gimmicky sometimes smother's intelligibility. (Ceejay)

0.30 **Newsnight** with Peter Snow
 1.15 **The Late Show**, Arts and media magazine
 1.55 **Weather**
 2.00 **Weekend Outlook**, The Open University's weekend programmes

9.30 The Red Cross Gull Appeal. In aid of the work of the British and International arms of the Red Cross

9.35 Crimewatch UK. Nick Ross and Sue Cook appeal for the public's help in solving crime. This edition includes reconstruction for the big murder suspect's family man David John, 39, found dead in his car on Clarendon Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, last November, and the stabbing of 26-year-old Geraldine Peck in Cardiff, four days before Christmas. (Ceefax)

10.20 Question Time chaired by Peter Sissons. Among the guests are the Labour MP Margaret Beckett and Melvyn Bragg

11.20 Crimewatch UK Update

11.30 Spenser, for Hire. Rags. The casebook of a Boston private investigator. (Rai) Spenser (Robert Iler) tracks down a wingtip killer. Wales. Snooker. 11.30-12.15. 12.10-12.15 News and weather

ACE 2:30-4:00 Coast to Coast People
LYNNE TEES
London escape 1:50pm-2:20 Santa Barbara 6:00 Northlake 8:30-7:00 Bookends 10:45 There You Go 9:00 Night 11:05 Prisoner: Call Black! 12:10 Mellowed Out: Price: Perfect Friday (Stanley Baker, David Attenborough) 2:00 Chameleon 3:25 Night Beat 4:25 Sid with Klemmer 4:40-5:00 Lister
ALISTER
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ORKSHIRE
London escape 6:00pm Channel 4:30-5:00 Bookends 10:45 Columbia Circle Saturday 11:15 Tens Pussel 11:50 Friday The Firefighter (Charles Brown, UK) Ireland 12:10-12:30 The 100th Anniversary of The 100 Club Channel 4:30-5:00 Mellowed Out: Price: Perfect Friday (Stanley Baker, David Attenborough) 2:00 Chameleon 3:25 Night Beat 4:25 Sid with Klemmer 4:40-5:00 Lister
AC
London escape 6:00pm Call 12:10 9:25 Vegetarian 10:00 Stashed 12:10 Daily P Cowm 12:30p

Newspaper 12:45 Slot: Maltin 1:00 Countdown 1:30 Business Daily 2:00 Third Hour 2:45 Price: Perfect Friday 3:00-3:15 Tonight with Jonathan Ross 5:45 Home 6:00 Newspaper 6:15 Home 6:40 Pabst V 7:00-7:15 The 100th Anniversary of The 100 Club 7:30 The Cowboy Show 8:30 Newspaper 8:00 Chello Art V Network 9:40 Summer 10:00 Orchestra 10:25 Europa 11:25 The Waste of Time 11:45 Call News Magazine Special 12:00 Directed

RTE 1
Stanic 12:15pm Daily Newspaper 1:20p Look Here 1:50pm News 1:45 Shakespeare in Love 2:45 Price: Perfect Friday 3:00-3:15 Tonight with Jonathan Ross 5:45 Home 6:00 Newspaper 6:15 Home 6:40 Pabst V 7:00-7:15 The 100th Anniversary of The 100 Club 7:30 The Cowboy Show 8:30 Newspaper 8:00 Chello Art V Network 9:40 Summer 10:00 Orchestra 10:25 Europa 11:25 The Waste of Time 11:45 Call News Magazine Special 12:00 Directed

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NETWORK 2
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CRICKY ONE

● **TV** As the *Atena* and *Microtopos* satellites.
8:00am *The DJ Kat Show* 8.40 *Radio 5*
● **Appetizer** 10:00am *Here's Lucy* 10.30 *The Young Doctors* 11:00 *The 500th* and *Revisited* 11:30 *The Young and the Restless* 12:30pm *Sale of the Century* 1:00 *True Crime* 1:30pm *1,980* 2:00 *Model's Navy* 2:30 *Love At First Sight* 2:50 *Living Color* 3:00 *The Simpsons* 8:30pm *Wipeout* 9:00 *Wipeout* 9:30 *Wipeout* 10:00 *Wipeout* 10:30 *The Outer Limits* 12:00 *Project* 2:00 *Stayed*

CRICKY NEWS

● **TV** As the *Atena* and *Microtopos* satellites.
● **Radio** The following schedule may be subject to alteration:
● **News on the hour.**
● **5:00am** European *Business Today* 6:00 *European Business Today* 6:30 *Sale* 7:00 *News Sunrise* 8:30 *Nightline* 10:00 *Oprah* 11:00 *International Business Today* 11:30 *Report* 12:00pm *NBC Today* 2:30 *Parliament* Live 3:00pm *News* 3:30pm *News* 4:00pm *News* 4:30pm *News* 5:00pm *News* 5:30pm *News* 6:00pm *News* 6:30pm *News* 7:00pm *News* 7:30pm *News* 8:00pm *News* 8:30pm *News* 9:00pm *News* 9:30pm *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00am *News* 10:30am *News* 11:00am *News* 11:30am *News* 12:00pm *News* 12:30pm *News* 1:00pm *News* 1:30pm *News* 2:00pm *News* 2:30pm *News* 3:00pm *News* 3:30pm *News* 4:00pm *News* 4:30pm *News* 5:00pm *News* 5:30pm *News* 6:00pm *News* 6:30pm *News* 7:00pm *News* 7:30pm *News* 8:00pm *News* 8:30pm *News* 9:00pm *News* 9:30pm *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00am *News* 10:30am *News* 11:00am *News* 11:30am *News* 12:00pm *News* 12:30pm *News* 1:00pm *News* 1:30pm *News* 2:00pm *News* 2:30pm *News* 3:00pm *News* 3:30pm *News* 4:00pm *News* 4:30pm *News* 5:00pm *News* 5:30pm *News* 6:00pm *News* 6:30pm *News* 7:00pm *News* 7:30pm *News* 8:00pm *News* 8:30pm *News* 9:00pm *News* 9:30pm *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News* 3:30am *News* 4:00am *News* 4:30am *News* 5:00am *News* 5:30am *News* 6:00am *News* 6:30am *News* 7:00am *News* 7:30am *News* 8:00am *News* 8:30am *News* 9:00am *News* 9:30am *News* 10:00pm *News* 10:30pm *News* 11:00pm *News* 11:30pm *News* 12:00am *News* 12:30am *News* 1:00am *News* 1:30am *News* 2:00am *News* 2:30am *News* 3:00am *News*

9.35 **4.55pm Open University (FM only)**

0.35 Weather; News Headlines
0.35 Concerto Concerto: Berlioz
LSD Under Davis; Brahme
(Prelude) in G minor, Op 79
Rachin (No 184, piano)
Händel (Concerto grosso, in D,
Op 3 no 8; Academy of St
Martin-in-the-Fields under
Nelson Hartner)

1.30 News

2.30 Morning Concert (continues)
Cherubini: Requiem; Son
and Stranger; Beem SO under
Maestri Grandos (Viñete
produces); Jüßen Bach;
Gottlieb: Glax (The French
Forest: Unter Orchestra under
Tommy; Weber (Sonnet
Cocerto in E flat, Op 6)
Bemberg SO under Clap
Gardner, with Eduard Brunner)

3.30 News

4.30 Composers of the Week: Liszt.
Der vo der Himmel liebte
den Menschen; Symphonie
no. 4, Mendelssohn; Liszt:
Heilung; Die Drei Zigeuner
(Hungarian State Orchestra
under Károly Böhm)
Concerto No 2 (Vienna SO
under Günter)

5.35 News

6.35 Music inspired by
Peterson's book on
Monteverdi (from one of his
titles: Chieravento: London
Symphony Orchestra, conducted
by Jacob Lindberg, theoretical)
Schubert (Apollo, later noch
den Helden), D 628; Albin,
recherches, etc.
Mendelssohn, D 623; Nurnmair, etc.
Minnel, Erde schweiget und
windt, D 630; Dietrich:
Die best of the best from
Genala Morio, piano
(Fotograph Sound No 104,
Austria)
Musique de paterino, Book 2:
Claudio Arns, piano
Monteverdi (Orma) i bel viso:
Zefiro name: Consort
of Mvalve under Anthony
Rowley
Sonnet No 123: Claudio
Arms; Pergine (Macinal)
Sonnet; Vergine chora;
Vergine, quare legna
Vergine, ta e terre. Hillard
Vergine under Paul Miller;
Hans Pitzner (Vol 94 No 3,
Sauerländer)
auszuscheiden, Op 24 No 3:
Dietrich Foch-Dieskau,
violin; Jörg Demus, piano;
Schönberg (Requiem)
24: London Symphony under
David Atherton, with John

11.20 Concert from Kandahar: BBC PO
under Hartmut Haenchen, with
Edith Peinemann, violin,
performs Schubert (Symphony
No 8 B minor - Unfinished);
Dvořák (Violin Concerto in A
minor); Strauss (Death and
Transfiguration)

1.00pm News

1.05 Birmingham Lunchtime
Concert: Lydia Markovich,
voice; Clifford Barrows, piano;
perform Brahms (Scherzo in C
minor, F A E Sonata);
Mahler (Thema mit
Variationen); Shostakovich
(Sonata, Op 134)

2.00 Monteverdi ... the Musical:
talk about the concert
includes his collaboration
with St Patrick's High School,
London (Theatre Group of
the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra V)

2.40 Monoceros: Recorded at last
year's Salzburg Festival
Viennese State Opera Chorus
and Philharmonic Orchestra
under Seif. Greatly praised
for its clearness in the
With Philip Langridge, tenor,
he is tomorrow, King of Crete
and the Phaeacians

5.30 News

7.00 News

7.05 Third Act: The soprano Jane
Manning talks to Michael Hall
about the performance under
Fasch performs Martin)
Double Concerto for two
string orchestras, piano and
strings; Mozart (Violin
Concerto No 1, E-flat, 8.15
Czech writers and musicians
not about the recording
November 1989. 8.35 Dvořák
(Symphony No 5 in D, Op 60)

9.25 Denis Swift and Lisa Pilkington:
The best of their extracts from
Letitia Pilkington's memoirs,
published in 1748 (P)

9.50 In Our Time: A profile of
Italian composer Luca
Lombardi. La Canzone di
Gratia Ensemble
Contemporary, Geneva, under
Barncroft, with Gladys de
Benedictis, soprano; Klausur
(Kristine Scholz and Mate
Persson, piano); Sappho II
(Remble Court Campa
under Barncroft); Giochi
Fragments (Gladys de Benedicis,
soprano, Luca Lombardi,
piano)

11.00 The Holy-Toni-Art:
The priest Roosevelt Sylvis (T)

11.20 News

11.30 German Composers of the
Week: Witold Lutosławski (T)
1.00-2.25 Night Show (FM only).

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Britain to issue first ecu bond of £1.4bn

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

NORMAN Lamont, the Chancellor, has fulfilled the promise made by his forerunner to issue Britain's first bond denominated in European currency units (ecus). This will boost reserves, underline the government's commitment to the unit and enhance London's role as Europe's leading financial centre.

Only hours after the half-point base rate cut, the Treasury said the government is to issue a £1.4bn (£1.4 billion) ten-year bond, the

biggest new issue in ecus by sovereign or private issuers. John Major, the then Chancellor, said in the Mansion House speech last October that the government would be demonstrating its commitment to developing the ecu with a bond issue.

France pioneered the ecu bond in 1988 and has about £600 billion outstanding. Italy, Spain, Ireland and Denmark have also employed the bond.

The European Community, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank are among the institutions that have also turned to ecu bonds.

The terms, price and yield will be settled today, but the Treasury said the paper would be priced at between one and four basis points under the 10 per cent French bonds due 2001.

Snow adds to airport gloom

SNOW added to the fall-off in business caused by the Gulf war, at airports controlled by BAA, the former British Airports Authority. Traffic at Heathrow was down 25 per cent in the first week in February against the same period a year ago. The fall at Gatwick was 22 per cent.

BAA said the number of passengers using its airports during the first two weeks after the outbreak of war fell 21 per cent.

Skitex up 117% to \$76.8m

Skitex Corporation, the Israeli colour imaging system company whose chairman is Robert Maxwell, has announced a 117 per cent increase in net profits to \$76.8 million for 1990. Fourth-quarter profits were up 71 per cent to \$23.5 million. A fourth-quarter dividend of \$0.1 makes \$0.295 for the year.

The company said it had not been affected by the Gulf war.

Blystad option

Blystad Group, the former KCA Drilling, has acquired an option to buy 95.5 per cent of Asuleros Unidos de Veracruz (Auer) from the Mexican government, with concessionary rights to operate a shipyard in the Gulf of Mexico.



Additional funding: Henry Sweetnam says issue needed to reduce Wickes' debt.

Wickes seeks £43m in issue

WICKES, the troubled DIY group, is raising £42.6 million via a one-for-one rights issue at 32p in order to reduce its high borrowings. The issue has been fully underwritten by SG Warburg, brokers to the group (Gillian Bowditch writes).

The group also revealed a £7.85 million loss for the year to December compared with profits of £38 million in 1989.

Sales fell to £623.9 million (£683.7 million). There is an exceptional charge of £13 million for closures and redundancies. The loss per share is 4.5p, against earnings of 21.6p. There is no final dividend.

Henry Sweetnam, the chairman and chief executive, said the group had repaid its borrowings from the £283 million acquisition of Hunter

Timber on time, but would break important covenants on its loan agreements if it did not get additional funding. The banks have agreed to restructure their loans to Wickes assuming the rights issue goes ahead.

Mr Sweetnam said he believed the money raised would be enough to sustain the group.

Times, page 31

German rate rise attacked

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

GERMANY'S senior European Commissioner has attacked the Bundesbank's decision to raise interest rates in the face of protests from other European countries.

Martin Bangemann said yesterday that the bank's decision had been in defiance of all outside "political considerations" and that it was "a major mistake". The Bundesbank raised interest rates by half a point at the end of January, against the world

trend toward lower rates. The move has been unpopular because of the economic effects elsewhere in Europe and because the countries committed to monetary union are supposed to be attempting to make policies converge.

Mr Bangemann said the lesson for monetary union was that central bankers could be too independent for their own good and that some degree of political accountability was essential. Faster progress to-

wards a European central bank was vital.

Mr Bangemann, who is in charge of the completion of the single market before 1992, also said he was nearing the end of his patience in the talks over liberalising the European car market. He said the commission had designed a "soft landing" for the protected French and Italian car industries but that the governments concerned were dragging their feet over agreement.

Labour attack over Fimbria

By JON ASHWORTH

THE Department of Trade and Industry has come under new attack for not stepping in to assist Fimbria, the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association, which was said last week to be close to financial collapse.

Marjorie Mowlam, shadow trade and industry spokeswoman, accused the department and the Securities and Investments Board, the two main players on the financial services stage, of "passing the buck" over the Fimbria issue. She told the Labour finance and industry group: "The intractable problem of what to do with Fimbria is turning into a running sore and deflecting attention from the need to protect the public."

The SIB has ruled out the possibility of an early change to the system of financial self-regulation or a financial hand-out to ease the burden on Fimbria's 7,300 members, who have to share costs of £12 million due to the Investors' Compensation Scheme.

Sir David Walker, SIB chairman, met Sir Gordon Downey, chairman of Fimbria, on Tuesday, to discuss ways of spreading the burden of costs. Fimbria, which has more members than any of the other self-regulatory organisations (SROs), has to contribute up to £19 million a year towards the £100 million compensation fund, set up to help bail out investors who lose money when an authorised firm collapses.

The collapse of Dunsdale Securities has triggered a rash of claims on the compensation fund, which pays up to £48,000 to investors who suffer loss. Investors in the Levitt Group have yet to learn whether their claims will be met under the scheme.

The SIB has stressed that investor protection remains its most important aim, and that Fimbria is expected to meet its contractual obligations to the compensation fund.

Godfrey Jilling, Fimbria's chief executive, has said cost-cutting measures, including the loss of 40 jobs last week, would help Fimbria remain solvent throughout the forthcoming financial year.

The DTI has said it will respond to Fimbria's comments in due course.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

GEC offshoot wins orders worth £710m

GEC Alsthom, a joint venture between the General Electric Company of Britain and Alcatel Alsthom of France, has won orders for five liquefied natural gas tankers worth £710 million. The ships, each with a capacity of 130,000 cubic metres of gas, will be built by Chantiers de l'Atlantique, GEC Alsthom's subsidiary, at St Nazaire, for Petromex, the Malaysian state oil company.

Orders for two further 2,900-tonne Floreal class frigates, costing £56 million, were also confirmed by the French ministry of defence yesterday, bringing total orders for the ministry to six ships. The liquefied natural gas tankers will use the membrane system rather than spherical domes to contain the gas. They are to be delivered during a period of three years from July, 1994. The shares in GEC added 5p to 196½p after the announcement.

Generator registration

POTENTIAL investors in National Power and PowerGen, the electricity generating companies, have until midnight tomorrow to register for the incentives available with the shares. More than 200,000 people have already registered with the Electricity Share Information Office, in addition to the 7.4 million who registered during the campaign to sell the 12 electricity distribution companies last year.

Grandon in Stonehill buy

GRANDON Holdings, a trading and distribution business in Hong Kong, has acquired 12.5 per cent of Stonehill Holdings, the furniture maker and property developer that passed its interim dividend in December owing to a lack of distributable reserves. Stonehill shares stayed at 22½p. Grandon said the shares were acquired as an investment, may lead to a trading relationship between the companies.

Occidental to cut jobs

OCCIDENTAL Petroleum expects to cut its worldwide workforce by at least 1,000 by the end of September as part of a restructuring plan to save \$100 million a year. As a first step, 200 employees are to lose their jobs at corporate offices. The redundancies will be in addition to any reductions arising from asset disposals.

Occidental employs 1,100 people in the United Kingdom, principally in its North Sea operations. Fewer than 50 employees remain in London after the company completed the relocation of its finance and exploration departments to Aberdeen last summer.

US imports of oil fall

IMPORTS of crude oil and petroleum products by America averaged 7.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in January, 20 per cent lower than a year ago, the American Petroleum Institute said. Refined products supplied from primary sources fell 1.4 per cent to 16.7 million bpd. The drop in deliveries of refined products is understated because 1990 deliveries were unusually low.

Touchstone to advise

TOUCHSTONE, the computer services company, will be writing to shareholders following Tuesday's announcement from Stratagem Group, declaring its all-share offer partially unconditional. Stratagem, which increased its offer to £6.1 million last month, claims to have acceptances for 54.3 per cent of the ordinary shares and 35.8 per cent of the loan stock.

BOC leaves venture

BOC Group, the industrial gases company, has pulled out of a joint venture to build a 1,000 megawatt, combined cycle gas fired power station on Teesside, Cleveland. BOC said last November it was part of its strategy.

However, Northern Electric and Hydro-Electric, its partners in the project, said they were convinced the project was commercially attractive. They will seek another partner, but may carry on without one. BOC, one of Britain's largest power users, has already signed a contract to buy electricity from Northern Electric.



NatWest announces that with effect from Wednesday 13th February 1991 its Base Rate is reduced from 14.00% to 13.50% per annum.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to NatWest Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

41 Lothbury London EC2P 2BP

BARCLAYS BANK BASE RATE

Barclays Bank PLC and

Barclays Bank Trust

Company Limited

announce that with effect

from 13th February 1991

their Base Rate decreased

from 14% to 13.5%.



BARCLAYS BANK PLC AND BARCLAYS BANK TRUST COMPANY LIMITED. REGISTERED OFFICE: 54 LOMBARD STREET, EC3P 3AH. REGISTERED NUMBERS 1026167 AND 920880.

Retail sales fall undermines US recovery hopes

By OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

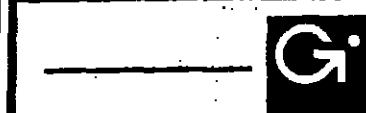
AMERICAN retail sales fell a further 0.9 per cent last month, after a 1.5 per cent drop the previous month, providing little evidence that the economy was starting to improve.

The seasonally adjusted commerce department figure for January was slightly better than market expectations.

However, a large revision of the December fall from the 0.4 per cent drop initially reported is unlikely to prompt forecasters to make their growth predictions more favourable.

Many economists are looking for the economy to contract at an annualised rate of 2 per cent in this quarter.

Wall Street analysts believe it is unlikely that retail sales will show a rebound this month, despite interest rate cuts and the increasingly widespread view that the recession



Girobank plc Base Rate

Girobank announces that with effect from close of business yesterday (13th February 1991) its Base Rate is reduced from 14% to 13.5% per annum.

Reg Office: 10 Milk Street London EC2P 8JH
Reg No: 1950000



Coutts & Co announce that their Base Rate is reduced from 14% to 13.5% per annum with effect from the 13th February 1991 until further notice.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate linked to Coutts Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

Coutts & Co
440 Strand, London, WC2R 0QS

ANZ Grindlays Base Rate

ANZ Grindlays Bank plc announces that its base rate has changed from 14% p.a. to 13.5% p.a. with effect from 13th February 1991.

ANZ Grindlays Bank
Private Banking

13 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LF
Telephone 071 930 4611
Member ANZ Group

Base Rate Change

With effect from the close of business on Wednesday, 13th February 1991 Co-operative Bank Base Rate changes from 14% p.a. to 13.50% p.a.

THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Co-operative Bank p.l.c. P.O. Box 101,
1 Balloon St., Manchester M60 4EP. Tel.: 061 832 3456

MORGAN GRENFELL

Morgan Grenfell announces that its Base Rate is reduced from 14% to 13.5% per annum with effect from 13 February 1991 until further notice.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate linked to Morgan Grenfell Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

Morgan Grenfell & Co. Limited
Member of The Securities Association
23 Great Winchester Street, London EC2P 2AX

How the base rate puzzle was solved

We were all wrong. We thought that Britain's monetary policy was being made in the Bundesbank. It now turns out that the decisions are made in the Bank of Spain. Or is it in the letters page of *The Times*?

After persistently urging the Chancellor to cut interest rates, it may seem curious that the government has finally been made. But if there was one lesson the government should have learned from the debacle of ERM entry, it is that presentation and timing are everything when running a policy that depends entirely on the confidence of the financial markets.

The official message yesterday from the Treasury and Bank of England was clear enough. Last month, the government finally became convinced that the inflation trend had turned decisively downwards. The CBI survey published on January 29, showing the smallest proportion of businesses in ten years planning to raise their prices, was one conclusive piece of evidence.

Another was the sharp fall in oil prices after the outbreak of the Gulf War.

However, the pound's sickly behaviour in the ERM remained a problem, despite the brief uptick to DM2.94 on January 16. As these pages have frequently reported, the Treasury never shared the markets' view that interest rate cuts would have to wait until the pound rose above the ERM midpoint of DM2.95.

Nevertheless, there was a problem with sanctioning a rate cut last month. The pound was "high, but not strong", in the words of one Treasury official. Translating this remark from Mandarin into English, the Treasury felt that the support for the pound last month was suspect, above all because of the pervasive expectation that the Bundesbank would soon raise German interest rates. Officials felt that it was safer to wait until German rates had peaked. With the pound also soaring against

the dollar after the discount rate move by the Federal Reserve Board, this view was confirmed last week and a decision in principle to cut rates was taken around Wednesday. Sterling's persistent weakness against the peseta was also a problem, but the two countries' positions were partly coordinated at the meeting of central bank governors in Basel on Monday. The final decision was taken by the Chancellor yesterday morning, essentially because the pound was trading strongly, the ERM grid appeared stable and the government had seen the January retail price index due to be published on Friday.

Could anyone ask for a simpler explanation for a half-point cut in rates? Unfortunately, this question is bound to start being asked in the markets once the dust

settles. The government went into the ERM with the apparent promise that British monetary policy would be switched to autopilot.

From October 8 onwards investors, industrialists and wage bargainers were to rely on the anti-inflationary integrity of the pound being preserved by the Bundesbank. If any further reassurance was needed, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor promised repeatedly that inflation would be the only other factor taken into account in monetary decisions, apart from the performance of sterling.

But by yesterday's action, the government has confirmed the view which had always been taken by ERM-sceptics — that both these assurances were totally unrealistic. Interest rates are being cut when the pound is

at the very bottom of the ERM, grid when the most reliable measure of underlying inflation has just returned to an eight-year peak, and when German policy is still moving in the opposite direction.

If Mr Major is prepared to cut rates under conditions like these, he might as well go the whole hog. He should start saving industry from recession with a cascade of rate cuts, allow the currency to find its own level in the American manner — and call a spring general election for good measure.

Bullish move

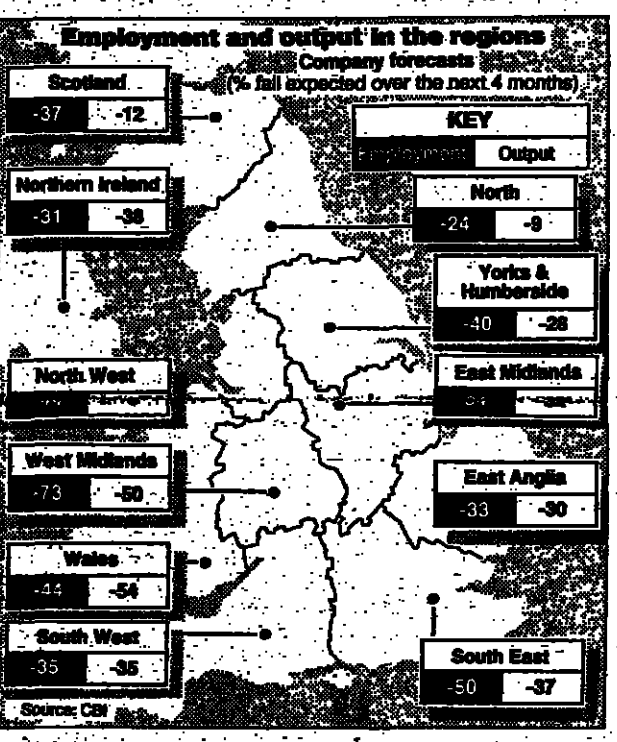
What next for shares? The outlook is still optimistic even though the market has risen 5 per cent since the start of the year. Much of the institutional cash mountain of £34 billion piled up by last December is nervously poised to

make a re-entry. Sterling's resilient reaction yesterday suggests that further base rate reductions are possible soon without drastic ERM implications.

There is indeed a horrendous results season to be negotiated, but the overwhelming feeling in the City is that it is time to look towards the end of recession and beyond. If those consensus forecasts of 12 per cent base rates and 5 per cent inflation by year end continue to hold sway, equities look set for a solid performance over the rest of the year.

The bullish case is admirably outlined by County Natwest where the December Footsie target is about 2550. That would give a 12 per cent capital gain and a total return on the equity market of around 17 per cent. Holding on to cash against a background of clearly falling domestic interest rates now begins to look much more risky. Shares may continue their pause for breath for a week or two more but any consolidation should be considered as a buying opportunity.

Recession hits all regions and prospects look grim



Midlands is much more devoted to manufacturing industry, which employs a third of its workforce. More men and three-quarters of its female workers are part time. White-collar work accounts for only a quarter of employment.

People work in heavy industry: car manufacturing makes up 17 per cent of the total, and heavy metal-bashing accounts for almost three-fifths of all manufacturing output.

But one feature of the recession is that these significant differences have not been enough to prevent either area from being hit. Figures from the Confederation of British Industry, published yesterday, show both regions at the

bottom of the tables for output, working below capacity, exports, employment, and demand. The recession is not so much spreading from north to south, but settling in deeply across most areas of the country.

Prospects are little better. As the accompanying map shows, both these two key regions have among the worst forecasts for declining employment and output, but in every region the gloom is pervasive, and in particular the figures indicate a continuation in the accelerating rate of unemployment growth, which will be confirmed today by government figures.

According to the CBI's and other evidence, only the Northeast (the economic planners' "north" region) is standing apart from this general trend. Output volume over the past four months, though still in decline at minus 3 per cent, is effectively static compared with the other regions, with the West Midlands leading the field at minus 44 per cent. Employment prospects in the North are actually less bad over the next four months than over the past four.

Regional economic analysts believe the North, wise after the early Eighties recession, has an industrial and employment mix that is more appropriate than other areas. Regional economic forecasts next week from Business Strategies, which specialises in regional analysis, are likely to confirm that view.

It is unlikely that the near-universally bleak picture of British industry painted by such accounts will be changed much by a half-point cut in base rates. As Edward Roberts, chief executive of Heath Springs and chairman of the West Midlands CBI, put it: "What we most want to see now is interest rates moving downwards — to 11 per cent by the end of the year."

PHILIP BASSETT
Industrial editor

Achilles' heel at Hanson

HANSON, master of the takeover, has an Achilles' heel. It may be able to take over companies, but Hanson cannot undertake the recession.

Yesterday's admission in Hanson's first 1991 quarterly report that "no one is recession-proof", coupled with flat fully diluted earnings, has led to a downgrading of profit hopes for the year to end-September.

In some investment camps, there is even the thought that this may be the year when Hanson's 27 years of continuous profits growth come to a halt. Three-month pre-tax profits of £241 million compared with a reported £225 million last time should more honestly be read as £241 million against £249 million, thus registering a downturn, because of the interest saving from 1990's convertible loan stock issue.

Other influences on the quarterly profits included a benefit of between £8 million and £10 million from acquisitions, while the knock from currency movements

was between £13 million and £14 million. Net cash stood at £560 million at year-end and has since crept forward, helped by £180 million of asset sales and continuing cash generation.

There are swings and roundabouts in the 0.5 per cent cut in British rates, but it will take time before the real impact filters through to Hanson's consumer-sensitive areas, and in particular to its brick-making operations. Hanson confirms that two London Brick kilns have been closed with the loss of a further 150 jobs.

Depressed conditions undoubtedly throw up a number of bid candidates, and one day Hanson will make another acquisition leap. Ahead of that, investors would be unwise to be shy of the shares.

But should profits ease to £1.275 billion from £1.285 billion, fully diluted earnings would ease from 19.9p to

19.6p a share, and Hanson's magic touch would appear to have slipped. At 216p, on 11 times prospective earnings, the shares are fully priced.

Wickes

IN CURRENT market conditions, Wickes is to be applauded for managing to get a £42.6 million one-for-one rescue rights issue completed and fully underwritten. So it seems churlish to ask whether the amount raised will be enough to keep the group going.

Pre-rights issue Wickes had borrowings of £140.7 million and shareholders funds of £13.5 million, giving it a gearing ratio of more than 1,000 per cent. Post rights, the numbers are £97 million of borrowings, £55 million of shareholders' funds and gearing in excess of 175 per cent; not a level with which many would feel comfortable.

Wickes' figures for last year showed a pre-tax loss of £7.85 million (£38 million profit). Sales fell from £683.7 million to £623.9 million. Operating profits halved to £26.5 million and the interest charge rose slightly to £21.4 million.

An exceptional debit of £13 million and an extraordinary debit of £2.88 million for rationalisation and closure costs meant a bottom line loss of £9.95 million (£20.5 million profit). The loss per share is 4.5p, down from earnings of 21.6p. There is no final dividend although a 1p interim was paid. In 1989 dividends totalled 4p.

Hunter Timber, the business bought from Hilldown Holdings in 1988 for £283 million and which is the main reason for the high borrowings, made losses of £8 million compared with profits of £18 million.

Wickes will be struggling for some time to come. The shares, up 4p to 53p, are on a p/e ratio of 27 assuming profits this year of £7 million. They are over-rated.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Winter storms

THE chaos caused by last week's snowstorms had an unexpected twist for Martin Winter, the appropriately named venture capitalist partner of Biddle & Co., the City law firm. Exasperated by the poor state of London Underground on Thursday evening, Winter decided to check in to the luxurious £195-a-night Howard Hotel overlooking the Thames. After sleeping soundly, he descended into the lobby and, hearing angry voices, was struck by the sight of a dapper, pin-striped City gent, clad in a pair of furry moonboots, arguing with a hotel official. To his surprise he recognised the City gent as being Andrew White — an equally appropriate name given the weather — of Muir-Carby Rottkjaer, the American stockbroker. White, who had traipsed through the thick snow to a breakfast meeting, and had then left the restaurant only to make a telephone call, was stopped by a director of the hotel who accused him of ruining the £80,000 carpet in the reception. After a furious argument, during which the police were called, White and Winter — who had by then stepped in to mediate — managed to make their escape. "One would expect this sort of thing in a seaside hotel but not the Howard," says Winter. White, meanwhile, once a regular diner at the hotel, is still awaiting an apology.

Fleming's gain

MIKE Smith, rated number one analyst in the Eitel league table for the overseas traders sector — recently renamed the business-services sector — has resigned from Charterhouse Tilley and will, at the start of next month, join Fleming Securities. Smith, aged 47, a one-time partner of Simon & Coates, had been with Charterhouse Tilley for two years, ever since the withdrawal from the UK equities market of Chase Securities, which had acquired Simon & Coates. "We have had our eye

on him for a long while," says Chris Munro, the Fleming Securities director in charge of UK and continental Europe. "He is very well rated and does all those companies like Inditex and Lomho, which is an area we haven't researched before. But we want him for two reasons, not only to continue researching that sector, but also to sell the products of our existing complementary team, comprising Robert Gibson and Tracy Gardiner. We are not so much looking to expand our coverage, but to add more quality."

Packer-whackers

WHEN Australian magnate Kerry Packer's life was saved by quick-thinking medics using a defibrillator, he promptly offered to provide half of the £2.5 million needed for them to be installed in most of the 900 ambulances in his native New South Wales. The ambulancemen there who have been selected to undergo specialist training to learn how to operate these new machines have now been nicknamed "Packer-whackers" by their colleagues.

Golfer's friend

PAT McDonald, aged 48, a Kettering businessman, hopes that selling golf accessories to Japan should be easier than taking coal to Newcastle. He is counting on there being 27 million golfers there — compared with 2.5 million in Britain — for the success of his spring trade mission to sell a

new little gadget to the Japanese. His BrollyCaddy, moulded in glass-reinforced polypropylene, fits on to any golfing umbrella and keeps a towel, tees and ball marker dry. McDonald, a 9-handicap man, had the idea when he lost his grip and sliced a shot during a downpour in Sydney, Australia. He found a manufacturer to start turning them out in November and has already sold 10,000, including an order from Germany, charging just under £7 each. "My research shows that it rains a lot in Japan," he says optimistically.

Ups and downs

WHOOO! Reuters, which had its own problems yesterday as several stockbroking firms downgraded profit forecasts for the company, managed to make a mistake with the one headline many in the Square Mile — and elsewhere in Britain — had been waiting so long for. Causing countless hearts to skip more than a beat, at 9.54am it broke the news of the half-point change in base rates by flashing the headline "Bank of England Raises..." to all its electronic news service subscribers. It was a full six minutes before a suitably calming correction appeared, which read: "In headline please read... BANK OF ENGLAND CUTS... instead of... BANK OF ENGLAND RAISES..." Perhaps it was just reaping its revenge on the City...

CAROL LEONARD

TSB BANK

With effect from the close of business on Wednesday, 13th February 1991 and until further notice, TSB Base Rate is decreased from 14% p.a. to 13.5% p.a.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to TSB Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

TSB Bank plc, 60 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9EA

Lloyds Bank Base Rate.

Lloyds Bank Plc has reduced its Base Rate from 14 per cent to 13.5 per cent p.a. with effect from the close of business on Wednesday 13 February 1991.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to Lloyds Bank Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

The change in Base Rate will also be applied from the same date by the United Kingdom branch of The National Bank of New Zealand Limited.

Lloyds Bank

THE THOROUGHREDD BANK

Lloyds Bank Plc, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 4HS

BASE RATE

With effect from close of business on 13 February 1991 Base Rate has been decreased from 14% to 13.5% per annum.

The Royal Bank of Scotland

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc. Registered Office: 36 St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YB. Registered in Scotland No. 90312.

STOCK MARKET

City lukewarm to cut in interest rates

THE City gave a grudging thumbs-up to the half point cut in interest rates with share prices and bonds enduring another volatile day.

The FT-SE 100 index recovered from a fall of almost 10 points to achieve a gain of nearly 20 points by about mid-morning. But a disappointing start to trading on Wall Street left it only 3.3 ahead at 2,267.8 by the close with 518 million shares changing hands.

Carlton Communications jumped 15¢ to 39½ after hosting a dinner in London for fund managers. Chairman **Michael Green** reassured them about prospects and answered questions regarding the group's proposed bid later this year for an independent television franchise.

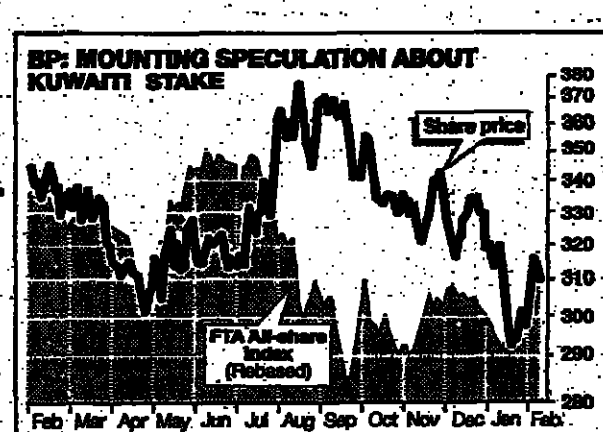
come as a surprise after all the efforts by the Bank of England and the government to play down speculation about such a move. The market had been discounting a reduction of at least 1 per cent and the first reaction of most brokers was that the cut was "too little, too late". But as the day wore on, most of them started to see it as a positive move, no doubt reassured by the pound's confident performance. Further

Government securities managed gains of up to £1 at the longer end, but closed below their best after learning

There was plenty of support for the government's move among the companies sensitive to interest rates. Brewery shares celebrated with healthy rises. Allied-Lyons rose 7p to 512p, Bass 8p to 777p, Devonish 7p to 154p. Grand Metropolitan 7p to 714p, Greenall Whitley 4p to 305p, Scottish & Newcastle 5p to 384p, Vaux Group 4p to 205p, and Whitbread A 2p to

It also provided a welcome boost for the property sector. **Hammerhead** saw its ordinary shares firm by 14p to 66p and the A shares by 18p to 638p, while **Allied London** gained 5p to 87p, **BHH** 6p to 40p, **Claydon** 3p to 50p, **Dunelm** 2p to 94p, **Freemantle** Estates 2p to 298p, **Gardiner** Trust 12p to 135p, **Hammerhead** 10p to 165p, **MEPC** 4p to 539p, **Mountfield** 2p to 66p, **Newsview Estates** 15p to 845p, **Regalair** 3p to 75p, **Reichardt** 8p to 67p, **Somerset Properties** 3p to 88p, and **Town Centre** 6p to 70p.

Stores were cheered by the prospect of an upturn in consumer activity. **GUS** A rose 25p to 1215p, **Alexon** 6p



to 454p, Boats 2p to 342p, Burtis 1p to 91p, Dikana 5p to 164p, Klingfisher 3p to 397p, Marks and Spencer 3p to 240p. Next 1½p to 27p.

Renters 4p to 141p, **Starts** 2p to 87p, **Shutdowns** 6p to 112p and **Tie Back** 2p to 22p.

Rolls-Royce, the aero engine group, fell 2p to 146p after a profits downgrade by Kleinwort Benson, the broker.

Kleinwort expects pre-tax profits of £260 million for this year but it has cut its estimate for next year by £20 million to £2230 million, blaming the downturn in the civil aviation industry. There are few orders for aircraft and even sales of spare parts are suffering.

The group is also carrying the research and development

BAA, the airports operator, advanced 6p to 360p despite a 10 per cent drop in the number of passengers handled in January compared with the last year. The group said the decline in passenger traffic had been prompted by the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf. Heathrow and Gatwick were the worst hit, but all other airports saw a decline with the exception of Aberdeen and Stansted.

Capital Radio rose 5p to 143p as UBS Phillips & Drew the broker, issued a buy note.

Janet Robson, an analyst

visited the company on Tuesday and says that the advertising market in independent radio has not been hit as hard as in television. She expects Capital to make pre-tax profits of £15 million for the current year (to September), against £15.8 million last time, followed by £18.3 million in 1992.

British Steel firmed $1\frac{1}{2}$ p to $123\frac{3}{4}$ p as the number of American investors holding its shares continues to grow. The Bank of New York now speaks for 158.3 million shares, or 7.9 per cent of the total, that are held on behalf of clients in the form of American Depository Receipts.

The first-quarter figures from Haseem, the industrial conglomerate, were also top of expectations, showing pre-tax profits of £22.5 million to £24.1 million. The figure included a three-month contribution from Peabody, bought last April, and a one-month contribution from Cevian, acquired in December. The shares were steady at 216½p.

that the proceeds would be used to rebuild Kuwait once the war is over. In the past few weeks, there have been a number of stories to the effect that the KIO is getting ready to dispose of a number of key stakes in companies, but, so far, there has been little evidence to substantiate these stories.

The fall in the BP price also depressed the rest of the sector with falls in Enterprise, 8p to 540p. Hardy, 4p to 182p.

John Fletcher, Budgens' chairman, was doing the rounds, explaining Tuesday's slump in interim pre-tax profits and no dividend. Despite his gloomy message, the shares rose 7p to 47p, prompting speculation that Sir Ron Brierley has been adding to his 17 per cent stake.

Luxmoie, 12p to 363p, Premier Consolidated, 2p to 47p and Shell, 3p to 457p.

Burmah Castrol rose 9p to 552p despite a profits downgrading by one of its leading admirers, Kleinwort Benson, which has cut its pre-tax forecast for this year from £101 million to £94 million, blaming the general downturn in demand for industrial lubricants.

MICHAEL CLARK

WORLD MARKET INDICES

Index	Value	Daily change (¢)	Yearly change (%)	Daily change (¢)	Yearly change (%)	Daily change (US\$)	Yearly change (US\$)
The World	619.9	0.0	8.0	0.4	9.0	0.1	11.4
(free)	118.5	0.0	8.0	0.4	8.8	0.1	11.5
EAFE	1086.3	0.0	8.7	0.5	7.9	0.1	12.2
(free)	105.6	0.0	8.7	0.4	7.7	0.1	12.1
Europe	635.2	0.5	8.7	0.7	7.0	0.6	10.6
(free)	137.3	0.9	6.5	0.5	6.5	0.7	10.6
North America	451.0	-0.1	7.0	0.0	10.5	0.0	10.5
(free)	116.9	-0.4	7.2	-3.1	7.7	-0.3	10.0
North Pacific	190.7	0.0	7.0	0.1	7.7	0.0	10.0
(free)	237.9	-0.4	10.3	0.3	8.8	-0.3	13.9
Far East	3452.0	0.4	10.4	0.3	8.5	-0.3	14.0
Australia	245.8	0.3	7.1	0.5	8.4	0.4	10.4
Austria	1324.9	0.2	1.3	-0.8	1.9	0.3	4.6
Belgium	744.4	-0.6	6.0	0.3	6.2	-0.5	9.4
Canada	428.2	-0.2	4.0	-0.2	6.8	-0.1	7.4
Denmark	1145.2	-1.1	6.2	-0.8	8.5	-1.0	9.6
Finland	63.8	1.5	-1.2	1.7	-0.1	1.6	2.0
(free)	90.5	1.0	5.2	1.2	6.4	1.1	8.5
France	50.9	0.5	6.8	0.6	6.9	0.7	8.0
Germany	723.1	0.9	5.6	1.2	6.1	1.1	8.0
Hong Kong	213.1	0.8	9.9	0.7	13.3	0.7	13.4
Italy	288.1	2.4	5.0	2.7	5.4	2.5	8.5
Japan	3824.8	-0.5	10.5	0.3	8.4	-0.4	14.1
Netherlands	760.3	-0.1	3.0	0.2	3.4	0.0	6.3
New Zealand	60.3	-0.7	17.3	-1.4	17.1	-0.7	21.5
Norway	1137.7	0.7	2.1	1.0	2.3	0.8	5.1
(free)	190.3	0.5	6.1	0.7	3.2	0.5	9.5
Singapore	203.5	0.5	8.1	0.2	7.5	0.6	9.8
South Africa	165.4	0.4	13.7	0.4	13.7	0.4	15.1
Sweden	1268.3	-0.7	11.4	-0.5	11.9	-0.7	12.6
(free)	181.0	-0.9	8.1	-0.6	9.5	-0.8	12.6
Switzerland	779.3	1.0	10.6	1.3	11.7	1.1	14.3
(free)	170.1	1.1	9.7	1.4	10.8	1.2	13.3
UK	683.1	-0.5	6.9	0.5	6.9	0.5	10.4
USA	409.3	0.1	7.3	0.0	10.8	0.0	10.8

fish? Local extension

Source: Morgan Stanley Capital International.

RECENT ISSUES

EQUITIES			
Atlantic Resources		Invergorden (135p)	151
Aberforth Smr (100p)		Levercrest (108p)	86
Brentford Res (155p)	37	MACE	19
CHW Group (36p)	100 +2	MMI (20p)	3
Castle Cairn (50p)	134	Malaysia Capital	59
EFM Jaws Ltd (50p)	25	Midland Radio	84
Essex (100p)	30	Pennamont (10p)	9
Farer Paper (175p)	37	Pelican Co (100p)	9
Foreign & Col	58	Protus Int (84p)	103 +3
	140	Seton Healthcare	158
	41 +1	St James Place (130p)	64 -1

FT-SE 100 VOLUMES

[illegible]

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

First Dealings February 4	Last Dealings February 15	Last Declaration May 18	For Settlement May 28
Call options were taken out on 132,891 Brent Walker, Budgens, Cannon Street Investment, Cookson Group, Dares Estates, F&I, Hanson Wts, Kelt Energy, Water Lawrence, Lonrho, Lucas, Oliver Resources, St Modwen, Stakis, Unilech.			

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Index	Cdn.				U.S.				Index	Cdn.				U.S.			
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
AMC	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(512)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(513)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(514)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(515)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(516)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(517)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(518)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(519)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(520)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(521)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(522)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(523)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(524)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(525)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(526)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(527)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(528)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(529)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(530)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(531)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(532)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(533)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(534)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(535)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(536)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(537)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(538)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(539)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(540)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(541)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(542)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
ASD	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
(543)	300	300	300	300	5	12	14	20	212	40	45	75	85	5	12	14	20
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partially striped Central-Afr. ruminant
discovered 1900 with likeness to
giraffe, deer, & zebra. [native]

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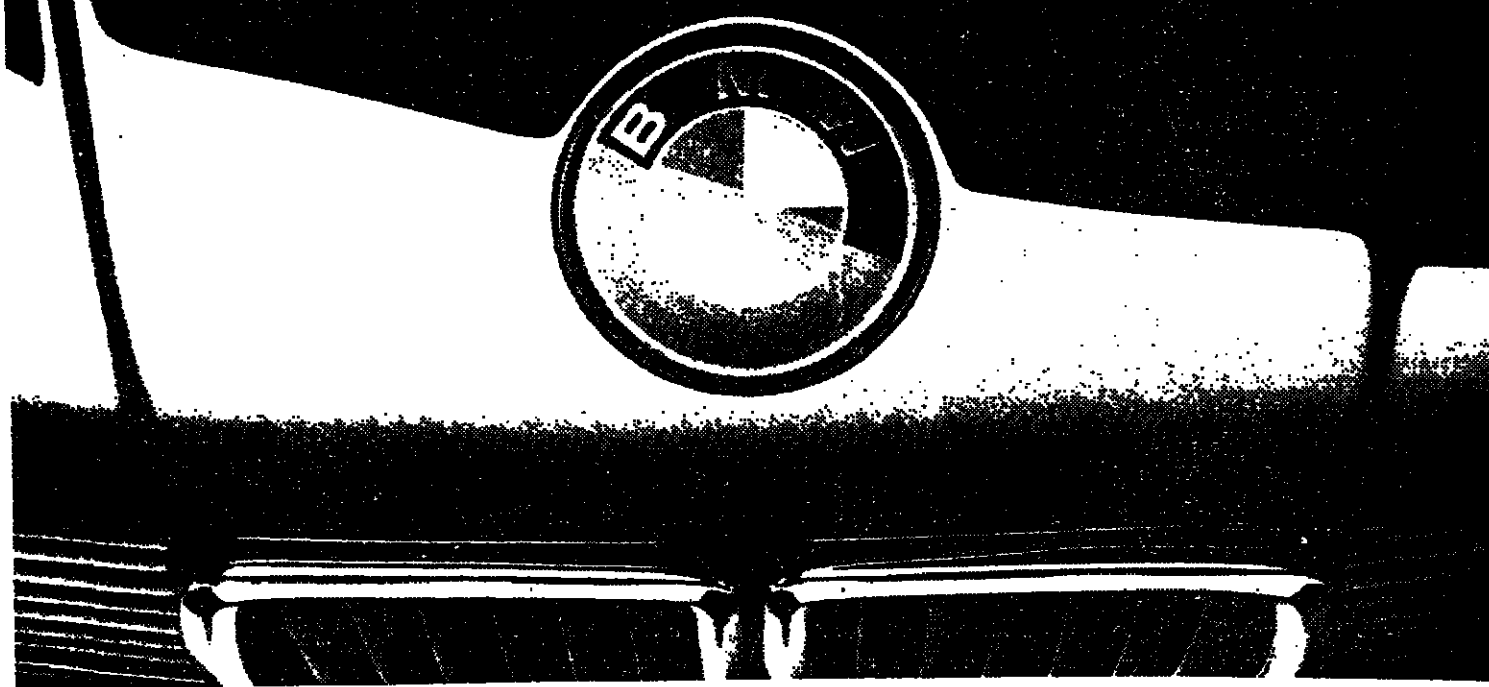
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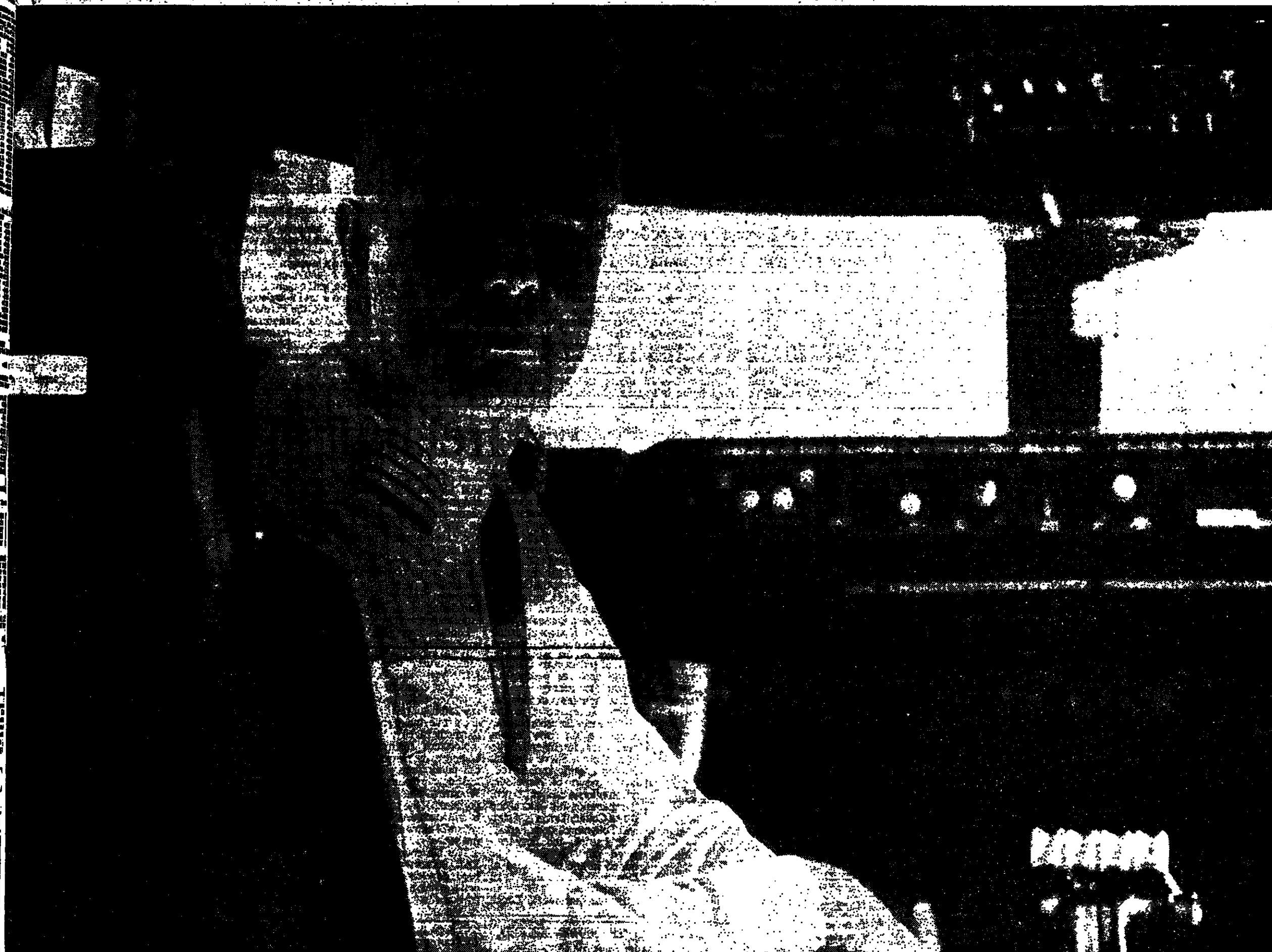
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MONEY MARKETS

1990/91	Price	Gross Yld	1990/91	Price	Gross Yld	1990/91	Price	Gross Yld
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The clean island unites in a green campaign



The style of a country where traditions have lived on longer than in other parts of Europe: a woman of Inishmaan (left) in her hand-made shawl; the Giant's Causeway, one of the wonders of the world; a rural bar-room philosopher prepares to air his views

Far upwind of Europe's main sources of acid rain and smog, only lightly industrialised and with uncluttered roads, Ireland is being promoted throughout Europe as "the green, clean island". The boast is that Ireland has Europe's least polluted air, rivers and coastal waters to add to some incomparable scenery and a wealth of cultural traditions and relics dating back to neolithic times.

In the past two years, Ireland has been marketed increasingly as

a single entity. Partition may still be a political reality, but for the tourist industry the Irish border is being eroded fast. The tourist boards north and south are working with an unprecedented degree of co-operation. Encouraged by a £1.5 million joint budget for 1991-2 from the International Fund for Ireland, they are sharing stands at international fairs, producing all-Ireland sales literature and marketing one-island packages.

The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland used to rely on

Ireland says it has Europe's least polluted air, rivers and coastal waters, and north and south are combining for tourism. Bob Rodwell reports

visiting friends and relations to sustain their tourist industries, particularly people of Irish ethnic origin in the United States and the white Commonwealth.

Even before the recession and fears of Gulf war terrorism caused transatlantic travel to slump dramatically, the emphasis had switched to promoting Ireland to a

wider audience. Today's priority is to attract what one official calls "pure holiday-makers... choosing Ireland simply on its appeal as a new holiday destination".

The emphasis in the shorter term has shifted to Britain and particularly to the Continent. In Northern Ireland alone, 1990's final figure is expected to show

there were 70 per cent more continental visitors than in 1989, which showed an increase of 44 per cent on 1988. In the republic, international arrivals grew by 16 per cent in 1989, against a world average in pre-recession times of 3 per cent.

Activity holidays — exemplified by a recent all-Ireland brochure in

French, tempting French-speaking players to sample the 274 golf courses — are the bedrock of Ireland's tourism.

Two activities, sailing and fishing, will benefit in 1993 when Ireland's main cruising and angling areas, the Fermanagh Lakeland and the Shannon Estuary, are linked by the restoration of the mid-Victorian Erne-Shannon canal, after a separation of more than a century. Work on this £30 million, European Community-supported project started last Nov-

ember. In two years' time sailors and fishing enthusiasts will be able to navigate through much of western Ireland on both sides of the border.

In 1993, a £4 million computerised database and reservation system at travel outlets throughout the world, known as Gulliver, will come into operation. At the same time, computerisation will revolutionise the genealogical market. Six genealogical centres will enable latter-day Irish people to discover their roots.

Tourists break siege of Northern Ireland

NORTHERN Ireland tourism has had a Herculean task during the past 20 years because of terrorism. However, the message that the entire province is not under siege and that life does, on the whole, go on normally is getting through. In 1989, for the first time since the troubles began in 1969, Ulster had more than a million visitors, (Janet Devlin writes).

Golf-playing American businessmen, attracted by low

green fees, empty fairways and the single European market, are also enquiring about buying property.

Locals are being out-priced and out-booked by Germans seeking cruises on Lough Erne, in County Fermanagh, which is bigger than the Norfolk Broads. Last summer, downtown Belfast shoppers were met by the unusual sight of Japanese in their crowds.

The government has set the Northern Ireland Tourist

Board (NITB) a target of 1.6 million visitors by 1994, which is 70 per cent higher than the 1988 figure.

Most holiday-makers enter the province from the republic. Increased joint marketing by the NITB and the Bord Fáilte, its opposite number in the republic, is aided by grants from the European Community and the International Fund for Ireland.

Belfast international airport, however, just outside the

city at Aldergrove, carries 2.2 million passengers a year. A multi-million-pound improvement scheme, including a hotel, has begun. The airport expects to match last year's £5 million profit despite problems caused by the Gulf war, and is preparing for privatisation within two years. The cancellation of ferries between Belfast and Liverpool was a blow, both to passengers and freight carriers, but Larne harbour has had record traffic.

Few places in Europe offer more than Northern Ireland in unspoilt countryside, spectacular scenery and natural features. To the north lie the Glens of Antrim, fringed by 60 miles of coastline interrupted by Ballycastle, host of the Oul' Lammis Fair, the centuries-old folk gathering, the Carrick-a-rede rope bridge, and the old Bushmills distillery.

The Giant's Causeway, with its 40,000 hexagonal stone columns, is one of the natural wonders of the world. The ruins of 16th century Dunluce Castle and the beaches of Portrush are near by.

The mountains of Mourne, which "sweep down to the sea" in Percy French's popular song, are the best known mountains in Ireland. The highest peak, Slieve Donard, reaches 2,796ft. At their foot is the resort of Newcastle, which offers a crescent beach, the championship links of the Royal County Down golf club and Tollymore Forest Park.

St Patrick, the fiery-tempered saint, is said to be buried in the churchyard of Down Cathedral in Downpatrick.

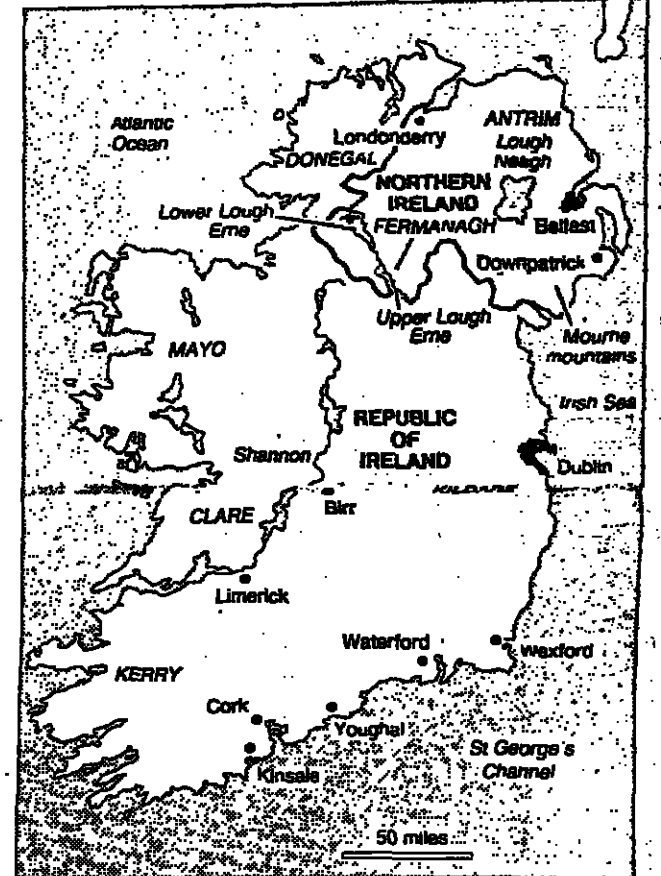
In the northwest, Lough

Erne is a paradise for birds, wild flowers and fishermen, and many world records for coarse angling have been set on the 55-mile waterway. There are the stately mansions of Castle Coole and Florence Court and, close by, the Marble Arch Caves. Near Enniskillen, Belleek pottery craftsmen "weave" their clay into elaborately decorated and exquisitely glazed porcelain.

Londonderry/Derry, popularly referred to as "Sike City" to avoid offence to both communities, was founded 1,400 years ago in an oak grove, or *dóire* in Irish. Its unbroken walls, between 20ft and 25ft high, 18ft to 30ft wide and a mile round, still encircle the medieval city.

Northern Ireland is also cashing in on its strong American connections. The ancestral home in County Tyrone of Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States, is still occupied by Wilsons, who will show callers around the house.

The Ulster-American Folk Park, just north of Omagh, has been developed around the cottage where Judge Thomas Mellon, founder of the Mellon



dynasty, was born in 1613. The government is offering loans and interest-free grants in visitors and benefit rural and urban areas economically without disturbing the natural environment.

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City charms on show

Dublin is cashing in on its title of cultural capital, Hugh Oram reports

Dublin has an ambitious target of 1.5 million visitors this year, 200,000 more than last year and almost half the projected number for the whole Irish Republic. Feasting a big fall in American visitors, the city's tourism interests are banking on more British and Continental European visitors, and making the most of its status as European cultural capital for this year.

Although the festival is being run on a meagre budget of IRE3.4 million (about £3.1 million), Frank Magee, Dublin's tourism manager, expects it will draw most of the extra visitors. Funding for the festival is coming from the national lottery, which is giving IRE1.5 million (£1.3 million), private sponsorship, which is chipping in IRE1.1 million (£1 million), and cultural organisations such as the British Council and the Goethe Institute. Special events are being organised, from opera to street carnivals.

The Dublin region has 30 museums that visitors will enjoy. The Civic Museum, the Municipal Gallery and the National Gallery have all had refurbishment programmes. After Dublin's cultural festival has ended, the city will have two new museums as permanent memorials of the year's activity.

Dublin is a writer's city, although many of its best-known writers, such as Beckett, Joyce and O'Casey, spent much of their careers in voluntary exile, preferring to admire Dublin from a distance. Nevertheless, their memories are being pressed into service at the Dublin Writers' Museum. Two late 18th century houses at Parnell Square, near O'Connell Street, are being converted for the planned opening on May 30. The museum will include a Gallery of Writers.

Also planned for May is the opening of the Irish Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital, Kildare, a late 17th century residence, designed with many references

to Les Invalides in Paris and marvellously restored in recent years.

Dublin's other attractions include minor festivals. Late 18th century Dublin, largely preserved from the rapacious property developers of the Sixties, is the setting for the Georgian festival being held in May. Many privately owned Georgian houses and gardens will be opened to visitors, and fashions and music of the period will be featured.

James Joyce died in Zurich 50 years ago this year, so the Bloomsday celebrations on June 16 will be on an enlarged and more rumbustious scale than usual, including an open-air garden party in Merrion Square.

Joyce left Dublin for the last time when he was 30, yet boasted he could reconstruct the whole of the city from memory, a feat that will be reflected in June's Joyceana. Martin Dully, the executive chairman of Bord Fáilte, the Irish tourist board, admits that although pub life is not promoted as an attraction, it appeals to many visitors. Dublin has about 900 pubs. Many have been overrun with hideous plastic reproduction fittings, but authentic speci-

mens survive, such as the late 17th century Brazen Head, near Christchurch cathedral, and the late-Victorian Ryans, in Parkgate Street.

At weekends O'Donoghue's, a traditional Irish music pub just off St Stephen's Green, is so packed with tourists that many have to drink on the pavement.

A different kind of theatre can be enjoyed. Dublin's theatrical tradition, which traces a continuous line back to the 19th century music halls, has been revived. The Abbey and the Gate have played leading roles in this rejuvenation.

Accommodation has been expanded and improved. The city has seven Grade A* hotels. The biggest new hotel to have opened recently is the Hotel Conrad, in the city centre. The Conrad is just over a year old and was built at a cost of IRE20 million (£18 million). The hotel, owned by Hilton Hotels USA, has 181 bedrooms, nine suites and one of Dublin's highest hotel prices: its biggest suite costs IRE525 (£477) a night.

Two years ago, Jury's Hotel opened The Towers as a self-contained luxury hotel. From April, its double-room rate

will be IRE165 (£150). British visitors, mainly on business, make up between 25 and 30 per cent of its guest list. Trusthouse Forte has refurbished the 19th century Shelbourne Hotel.

More modest hotels cost about IRE50 (£45) a night for a double room. Guesthouses, where the rooms often have their own bathrooms, drinks cabinets, direct-dial telephones and television, can be considerably cheaper.

Self-catering houses and flats are a growing phenomenon in Dublin, and so, too, is the luxurious town house, offering just a few bedrooms. The Grey Door, a long-established Irish-Russian house in Georgian Dublin, has just opened seven spacious bedrooms.

Restaurants have blossomed in Dublin, although establishments such as the Bixby House, in Temple Bar, Dublin's answer to the Left Bank, are rare in serving authentic Irish cuisine. Expensive restaurants with an international clientele such as Patrick Guilfoyle's and Le Coq Hardi are balanced by more modest establishments such as Kilmartin's in Upper Baginbun Street, where good cooking can be enjoyed for less than IRE20 (£18) a head.

Good suburban restaurants have sprung up. Blackrock, on the bay between Dublin and Dun Laoghaire, is fashionable for out-of-town dining.

Dublin's compactness gives it a dual advantage. Most attractions are in or near the city centre, but from the heart of Dublin the blue outlines of the Dublin mountains can be seen, only ten miles away. Day trips into the undeveloped wilderness of the Dublin and Wicklow mountains and visits to the Newgrange megalithic site and the Japanese gardens in County Kildare are all possible.

The cultural-capital festival may have a small budget, but the city has such a diversity of attractions that it is an excellent short-break destination from Britain.



Attraction: one of Dublin's famed Georgian buildings

Hooking the Europeans

The republic is aiming at the Continent to replace business lost from America

spending IRE8 million (£7.3 million) refurbishing its St Columba ship for the Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire route. By June, the line aims to have four round trips a day on this route, and it is also planning to increase frequency on the Fishguard-Rosslare route.

The alternative on Irish Sea crossings is the Irish state-owned B&I Line, which operates on the Holyhead-Dublin and Pembroke-Rosslare routes. For tourists going to the scenic south and south-western counties of Ireland, mainly Cork and Kerry, the Swansea-Cork car ferry service is due to start again in March.

In the whole of Ireland, there are now 12 airports, many serviced by direct flights from Britain. Waterford airport, for instance, is just over an hour's flying time from Luton or Stansted.

Dolly points to other advantages for British holiday-makers coming to Ireland. Outside the main cities, driving on country roads often offers virtual solitude, with few other vehicles. Pets can be brought to Ireland free of any quarantine regulations.

Last year, 740,000 visitors came to Ireland from mainland Europe, half of them French and German. The Italians have suddenly taken Ireland to their hearts, the Spanish are keen and the Dutch market has revived, but Scandinavian tourists are rare.

At the end of January, Bord Fáilte ran a series of consumer workshops in Germany and Austria, in Berlin, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich and Vienna. For each session, about 800 people were expected, but 2,500 turned up.

Facilities in Ireland have been greatly developed, not just hotel, guest-house and self-catering accommodation, but visitor attractions. To start the current four-year investment cycle, ending next year and worth about IRE800 million (£730 million), IRE146.9 million (£133 million) was allocated from the European Community's structural funds.

For border counties, the International Fund for Ireland has allocated IRE12 million (£11 million) for improve-

ments. Every Grade A hotel in Co Donegal now has first-class health and leisure facilities. Initial projections for 1991 saw the tourism industry completing investments worth about IRE250 million (£227 million). Likely market conditions and the recent government decision to abolish the business expansion scheme, a tax relief investment device, for tourism accommodation development, may cause a downward revision.

In County Kerry alone, a prime tourist destination, current developments will cost IRE80 million (£73 million). These include the Sheen Falls luxury hotel, a Danish-owned IRE9.5 million (£8.6 million) project, set in 200 acres near Kenmare, which is due to open at Easter. April should see Ireland's first Club Med opening, also in Kerry.

The biggest single development to open this year will be Stranmillis in County Kildare, just west of Dublin. When completed, this IRE21 million (£19 million) Smurfit project will include a luxury hotel and an 18-hole golf course designed by Arnold Palmer.

An enormous variety of specialised holiday activities is being developed. Luxury cruising, once only available on the Shannon, is now available on the Grand Canal, starting 30 miles from Dublin. Kinsale in County Cork is being promoted as a centre for diving and yachting. Holidays on Ireland's islands and in rural communities are being encouraged, and the country's enormous heritage of gardens, many privately owned, is being opened up.

A number of historic towns, including Adare, Birr, Kinsale, Wexford and Youghal, are to be developed under the new IRE20 million (£18 million) Heritage Towns programme. In the north of County Mayo, the Ceide Fields, 2,500 acres of prehistoric monuments, will have all-weather viewing facilities and restaurant.

Bunratty in County Clare is the original theme park, and more are under way, such as

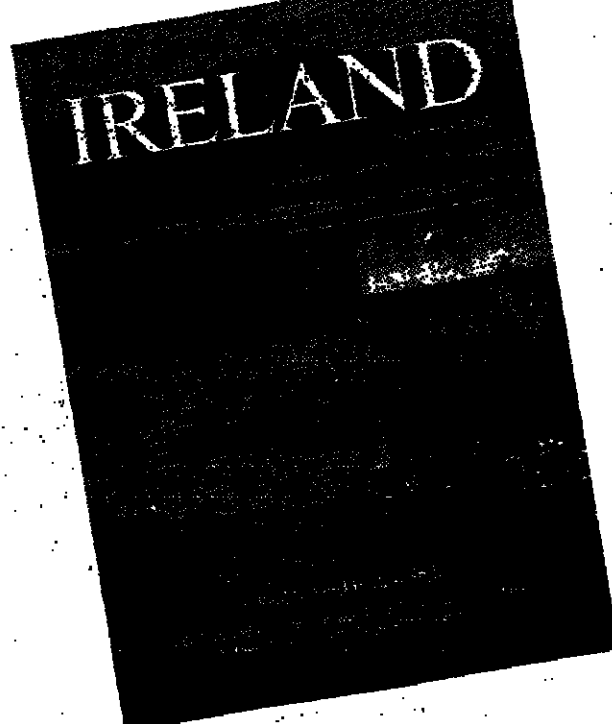
Celtworld, telling the story of early Celtic civilisation, planned for Tramore, in Co Waterford. Ireland has around 40 Blue Flag beaches and great, undeveloped tracts of hills and mountains.

There are negative aspects, Mr Dully says, such as the relatively high cost of car hire but the past decade has seen a leap in the quality and extent of facilities in Ireland.

The next step, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, is the launch this year of the Gulliver computerised information and reservations system. Designed initially for the travel trade, within a few years it will be available to individual holidaymakers.

HUGH ORAM

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SQUASH RACKETS

Leekes in promise to fight to finish

By COLIN MCQUILLAN

LEEKES Wizards, the Pimm's Premier League Champions, yesterday refused to contemplate abdication despite a 3-1 defeat at North Walsham that left them a match and eight points adrift of Carlisle Cannons at the top of the table.

"We are not quitters," the Leekes team manager, Robert Edwards, insisted yesterday after driving all night from Norfolk through freezing conditions to reach his Cardiff home.

"This was a dreadful result for us and there are no excuses. We lost rubbers in the lower order that should have been won."

But we face Cannons in Cardiff the day after the Leekes Welsh Classic tournament and, with hundreds of tickets already sold for that match, we expect the biggest home crowd the league has ever seen to lift us back into the race. Every team has to come monumentally unstuck at least once in the season and we plan that for Cannons in Cardiff."

Even a crushing home victory for Leekes may prove insufficient. Carlisle Cannons, watching snugly from their firesides this week as the resting squad, have so far lost 10 matches and relinquished only seven rubbers in 11 fixtures.

Their decision to strengthen at the top by wooing Chris Durrant away from Llanelli Club with a £20,000 contract has paid off by pushing an already competitive squad down the order, often producing a fine-up with Del Harris at second string, Simon Parke third and Paul Carter fourth.

Edwards started the season convinced that a top-20 lower order, including Mark Maclean, of Scotland, Adrian Davies, of Wales, and Jamie Hickox, of Canada, would be banker winners behind the undoubted top end of talent of Chris Robertson, of Australia, and Peter Marshall, of England.

His calculations ignored continuing relative performance, however. Maclean has failed to sustain his world No. 9 prestige even in the less demanding realms of fourth-string competition and Hickox, the World No. 19, appears to have lost the shot-making inspiration that once made him such a dangerous opponent. Only Marshall, the new British No. 1, with 11 wins from 11 league appearances, has fulfilled expectations.

At North Walsham, Davies was splendidly overturned, 9-1, 8-10, 9-6, 5-9, 9-2 by Tony Hands, the young Essex player who surprisingly emerged as a semi-finalist at last month's national championships. Hickox lost a 100-minute attritional battle to Mark Allen.

The other remaining challenge to Cannons' supremacy appears to finish with a last year, when L and P Lamb went to Birmingham without their first string, Jabangir Khan, and could manage only a 2-2 draw against Morris Pryor that left them 15 points off the leadership pace.

SWIMMING

Unauthorised poll prompts dispute

AMATEUR Swimming Association (ASA) officials met today to resolve England's funding aims after letters went out to 1,300 local authorities announcing the ASA's involvement in "Swimfit 91" without the knowledge of the governing body's office (Craig Lord writes).

The letters, from Murdo Wallace, the agent contracted to organise the Swimfit scheme for the governing bodies of England, Scotland and Wales, were designed to gauge interest among councils for this year's effort.

When replies from English and Welsh councils arrived at the ASA's office in Loughborough, however, it came as a complete surprise to officials. David Reeves, secretary of the ASA, said: "This letter did not go out with our approval. It is certainly a case of jumping the gun. As far as we were concerned, Swimfit '90 was a one-off last year."

No blame has been attached to Wallace, who acted after receiving a fax from Derek Stubbs, the ASA-appointed director of swimming for England, asking him to carry out the poll.

Stubbs confirmed that he had asked Wallace to send out the letters, but he said there would be no Swimfit '91.

BANK OF SCOTLAND BASE RATE

Bank of Scotland announces that with effect from Thursday 14th February 1991 its Base Rate has been decreased from 14.0% per annum to 13.5% per annum.

BANK OF SCOTLAND
A FRIEND FOR LIFE

Simon Barnes meets the men who wield power in sport: today, Jean-Marie Balestre

A turbo-charged president fuelled on egocentricity

JEAN-MARIE BALESTRE

Early career: 1939: sub-editor and reporter, *Droit de Vivre* (journal of the International League Against Racism). 1942: Resistance volunteer. Administrative career: 1952: Founder, *Fédération Française du Sport Automobile* (French Motor Sport Federation). 1954: joint founder and secretary general, *Syndicat National des Automobiles* (National Motorists' Association). 1973: president, French Motor Sport Federation. 1978: president, *Fédération Internationale du Sport Automobile* (International Motor Sport Federation). Since 1985: president, *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (International Automobile Federation).

industry is one of the largest in the world, and motor racing is its showcase. The tobacco industry is equally colossal: motor racing is its billboard. But you can't interject when Balestre is talking, as well stop a charging rhino with a well-timed quip. Besides, he anticipated the question.

"There are huge budgets in motor sport, hundreds of millions of pounds. Always there is a clash of interest, and the organisation must make a stand. Donec sport must take precedence over money. And so it is the responsibility of the president to establish regulations which must ensure an equal chance for every participant."

Perhaps that means that if you are too good, you find trouble. Certainly Ayrton Senna, Nigel Mansell and also Ron Dennis, of McLaren, might think so. Senna and McLaren will forever feel that Balestre robbed them of the world drivers' championship in 1989 through a disqualification. Balestre's intensely personal style of leadership turns all rows into personal feuds.

His egocentricity is so open, so naked, it is almost endearing. If you don't have to work with it, "It is a very important thing for the president himself to be good. To be credible and reliable. Trustworthy. If such a thing is established, we can be very successful."

He is a man of phenomenal energy, phenomenal drive, not to mention phenomenal courage. He had a triple bypass operation in 1989, was back at his desk within 13 days. His health has not stopped him, scarcely slowed him down. He is a journalist once, though not like any journalist I have ever worked with.

"We began with three people in a small room with £300 in our pockets. We did everything: journalism, management, sweep-

ing the floor. We created it with much energy, much work, much intelligence. We started with three people and one paper: when I left, we had 14,000 employees, including 3,000 journalists, 45 titles, 14 printing shops, three advertising agencies and 50 radio stations. And I left to take up the presidency of Fisa."

Balestre was involved in the formation of Fisa in 1978. He has fought endless wars, skirmishes and duels, most notably with the Formula One Constructors' Association. And Formula One still marches from strength to strength: after the Olympics and football, it is the biggest money-spinner in sport.

"That makes Fisa the third most powerful body in world sport. 'Fisa is my child. You are necessarily motivated to look after your child. I am very sentimental. And I have a great affection for the people who risk their lives. The great champions... *ils sont les plus purs chevaliers de la jeunesse des temps modernes*. Traduced: *bien*," he added to the interpreter.

"They are the purest knights of the youth of modern times," he said. Doesn't sound the same in English, doesn't sound the same when not thundered out by Monsieur le President. "Nous sommes une civilisation automobile," he said. "The twentieth century is the century of the automobile. Every schoolboy dreams of his first car. And Formula One is the spearhead of the industry."

"There are 39 constructors of cars in the entire world. There are 36 of them who are members of Fisa's commission, and 32 take part in Fisa championships. Why? Because it is the great chance to stage grand battles and to win great commercial battles. They want victories in championships and to sell cars."

This great contradiction hovers behind the words of all sport's power-brokers. We must keep commercialism out of sport, they say, never failing to add that their sport's income could buy and sell national Sport provides beauty and excitement to billions of people across the world: a cumulative total of 17 billion watched grand prix racing in 1990. Balestre says: "And on that evidence it is the most important sport in the world." By that reckoning, incidentally, or not incidentally, Balestre is the most important man in sport.

These power-brokers earn their lofty position in the world at large through the popularity of their sport, and the money that popularity can generate. But Balestre, like



all power-brokers, insists on the need to keep sport free of the sordid business of the market-place. The paradox is overwhelming. Sport is not about money, nor is power in sport about a very great deal to do with the vast sums of money television exposure can bring in. And there is still more: sport has a huge intangible value to politicians as well as to men of business. If you seize control of a major sport, you have one of the most satisfactory bases for power and influence readily available in a

democratic society. Balestre said: "I still have dreams." Balestre said: "I would like to establish a grand prix here in La Place de la Concorde and along the Champs Elysees." The problem is the cobble for the race and then remove the covering after the race. French tradition would not permit anything less.

"Second dream: a race in the Red Square in Moscow. Third dream:

to make the sports car championship as successful as Formula One." He is a restless, insatiable man: an unstoppable man, too. "One more hope: I hope to do the same interview with you again in 10 years' time." Balestre would then be 78. There are plenty of people to tell him: *vive le president*.

TOMORROW

João Havelange

GOLF

Norman takes outsider's view

Melbourne NO IMPARTIAL professional is better positioned to comment on the decline of American golf than Greg Norman, who is attempting here this week to win the Australian Masters for a record seventh time on the Huntingdale course.

The Queenslander has lived in the United States since 1964 when he became a member of the US PGA Tour after seven successful seasons in Europe. In that time, the balance of power in world golf has swung in favour of Europe, highlighted by their dominance of the Ryder Cup.

Norman shares with most sportsmen an aversion to watching his particular game on television. Even so, he has come down to Australia to see both the 1987 and 1989 Ryder Cup matches unfold. "The way the Americans finished, especially on their own soil at Muirfield Village, says a lot about the way American golf is right now," Norman said. "If they could get it into their heads that by being winners the money would take care of itself then that would help."

"The trouble is they don't like to put themselves through that pain barrier. The way the Tour is structured, they can make \$300,000 to \$400,000 by sitting back in their comfort zones and accumulating top-ten finishes. I honestly believe that is what is hurting American golf. The system is not bringing out the

best in the first of two articles Mitchell Platt unravels the riddles of Greg Norman, the Australian, whose great gifts have not brought him the major championships he craves

individual performer who thrives on pressure a la Tom Watson. Curtis Strange is the last one in that line."

Some perceive Norman to be intolerant, others indulgent. He has been called aloof and accused of being a sage with wisdom beyond his years. My view is that no player since Arnold Palmer has been blessed with such charisma as well being so charitable with his time. The Ellersburgh club in Buckinghamshire, where Norman would next to the day in the Championship at St Andrews last year, is certainly better known for being in close proximity to Chequers than for housing one of its members. It does mean, however, that I can vouch that Norman was the hearts of the members with his geniality and sense of purpose can only be fuelled by the knowledge that they have penetrated his defence.

Therein might lie the real reason as to why Norman has not won the Claret of the Claret in the major championships of the game. He talks of there being no intimidating factor in the game today although he recalls he was himself intimidated in his formative years by Australians such as Bruce Crampton, David Graham and Bruce Devlin and by Jack Nicklaus, Ray Floyd and Gary Player when they played in Australia. Nick Faldo has spoken of fearing Severiano Ballesteros but he has not mentioned the name of Norman.

Lane travels along a familiar road

FROM MITCHELL PLATT IN MELBOURNE

THE importance of being a good traveller was not lost on Barry Lane as he played alongside Greg Norman in the first round of the Pyramid Australian Masters here on the Huntingdale course.

In 1990, Lane, who won the Bell's Scottish Open three years ago, won £55,539 from 25 tournaments on the PGA European Tour but earned as much again by finishing third in the Lark Cup in Japan in November.

"It would have been a lot more as well if I could have held the putt," Lane said. "I finished five under par to Jumbo Ozaki's winning total of two under but I three-putted 11 times. Putting let me down in Europe last year. I started off badly on the greens and it never improved. I missed 11 half-

Norman admitted that the

BOWLS

Wood makes his experience tell

WILLIE Wood, of Scotland, and Adrian Welch, of Guernsey, both claim to have won their first club championships when they were 14; three years ago in Welch's case, 39 in Wood's (David Rhys Jones writes).

Age and experience, however, count for nothing if your opponent is beating you to the jack, and, for a long middle section of their Midland Bank world indoor singles championship first round match at Preston's Guild Hall yesterday, Wood had to give best to the drawing skills of the young Channel Islander.

After Wood had taken the first set, 7-1, Welch enjoyed his purple patch, taking the second by the same score. Wood regained control in the third set and led 6-2, but Welch coolly stole the shot on the fifth end. When Welch levelled the scores at 6-6 and drew two

superb opening deliveries on the eighth end, Wood lost his patience and, like a schoolmaster admonishing his pupil, put the jack in the ditch for an unobtainable lie.

Robbie Parrilla, the Commonwealth Games singles champion, sympathised with Welch, who stood no chance of getting the short with his last two bowls because of the position of Wood's touchers in the ditch. The Australian is one of a growing number of top bowlers who advocate the abolition of touchers.

The strike certainly turned the match Wood's way: he won the fourth set much more easily, bagging a couple of threes. RESULTS: First round: H. Duff (Scott) vs T. Morris (Wales), 7-2, 7-6, 7-1, 7-4, 7-3; R. Brown (Wales) vs A. Welch (Guernsey), 4-7, 7-1, 7-4, 7-3; W. 2, 4-7, 7-4; W. Wood (Guernsey) vs A. Welch (Guernsey), 7-1, 7-7, 7-4, 7-3.

BASKETBALL

Kingston face Split without key defender

AS THOUGH Kingston's task in Yugoslavia tonight against the European champions, Pop 84 Split, was not hard enough, the Carlsberg League leaders arrived on the Dalman coast last night without Mike Griffiths, absent because of work commitments (Nicholas Hastings writes).

The oft-tall Griffiths is not a prolific scorer but his fierce resolution in defence is considered so valuable that he is a regular member of the starting five.

Kingston's compensation for Griffiths' absence is that they have in Trevor Gordon and Martin Healen two England internationals capable of withstanding the most robust of opposing forwards. Both may start the game, in which Kingston will be hoping to reverse their two-point home defeat two months ago.

Healen's return to form could not have been better timed. His three crucial free baskets contributed towards Kingston's surprising upset of Aris Salomika (Greece) 77-74 in the Carlsberg League last week, and the preservation of the English club's hopes of making the final five in Paris in April.

VOLLEYBALL

Malory poised for fourth title success

By RODDY MACKENZIE

THE English Volleyball Association (EVA) looks certain to give the go-ahead for a week's extension of the league season after a weekend in which 45 out of 51 scheduled matches were postponed because of the weather.

With all of the men's and women's first division matches called off, the most significant fixture to take place was the rescheduled Royal Bank of Scotland English men's cup quarter-final between Team Nigma Malory and MGI Wexley, which Malory won in under an hour, 15-9, 15-2, 15-3.

Malory can wrap up their fourth successive league title this weekend if they can defeat both Raffle Trent Rockets and Hilton Leeds at home. Nevertheless, Jefferson Williams, the Malory coach, is looking for improvement from his team. In Scotland, six matches became casualties of the weather. Team Newsport may top of the men's first division by beating Cumberidge 15-6, 15-12, 15-13 the women's first division after beating Ellist Sports Jets.

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SPORT

Rugby union's scrumptious farce

By DAVID MILLER

THE instructions sent by Dudley Wood, secretary of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), to the England squad last week, setting out a code of conduct and regulations on "permitted and unpermitted activities" for material benefit, contain a paragraph of bluff good enough for *Charley's Aunt*.

The preface to the regulations, a copy of which has been obtained by *The Times*, states: "In case any of this should appear too restrictive, you should be aware that similar rules apply in most professional sports." This is not so.

Leaving aside the irony that Wood should find himself obliged — I cannot think it was

inadvertent — to draw comparison with professional sport when talking about behaviour within a sport, the RFU is clearly and further instance of the RFU attempting to intimidate the players in a confused situation.

The players, angry at the rejection of an advertisement tendered for the programme at Saturday's Calcutta Cup match at Twickenham, that was considered to be legitimate under the present regulations, have no idea of their amateur status bearings.

The RFU, equally adrift in an open boat without oars, let alone rowlocks, pretends it does know, and is making a vain attempt to convince the players that everyone is out

for a jolly on the Norfolk Broads, when the players are all too aware they are heading, in terms of a major spectator sport, that is far more commercialised by the RFU than it is by them, for an ocean race.

It must be presumed that the RFU have engaged a lawyer to draw up its regulations — unilateral for the moment, synonymous with none of the other leading national unions of the two hemispheres other than Ireland — yet no court would accept the inconsistencies that exist within the regulations that the players are expected to respect.

One of the most laughable is Regulation 1/3 under Acceptable Activities, relating to

payment in kind, when there must be "no identifiable rugby connection". This first begs the question of the identifiable connection of the player's name, the rugby connection being, of course, fundamental to the deal being done simply because the individual is a rugby player.

Yet also there is a note to Regulation 1/3 too pedantic by half in its nit-picking when it specifies: "A.N. Other sponsored by X.Y. Motors" is not acceptable. "Supplied to A.N. Other by X.Y. Motors" is acceptable. "Supplied to A.N. Other by MRFC by X.Y. Motors" is not acceptable. Who could possibly take seriously such a note? A car supplied is a car supplied.

There is a confusion of the

RFU's own making that not even it, I would suggest, could satisfactorily explain, in "Unacceptable Activities", regulation 2/9, which specifies: Advertising or endorsing any non-rugby related product (a) if there is a rugby connotation (by virtue of content and/or presentation), or (b) there is a breach of the proviso to regulation 4/1.

It would seem to follow that there must be a breach on every occasion, as 4/1 states that: "The RFU will fit out each player with the following — team blazer and tie; tracksuit full playing kit." It follows that it is impossible for a player to advertise anything other than non-sporting apparel, or so it would seem from these regulations.

With the rejection of the Timberland advertisement for Saturday — which, to the delight of the company, has provided infinitely wider publicity than would ever have been achieved by an advertisement printed in the programme, it is unlikely that the players will be willing seriously to consider as acceptable the existing regulations without a redraft. And that is not going to happen until after next month's meeting of the International Board.

Wood's preface admits a precise definition is to be determined, but states emphatically: "One thing is certain — it must be identical enforced for all the home unions and, eventually, for all IB countries." I fear he is whistling in the wind.

Darlington now thriving on a Little ambition

By LOUISE TAYLOR

WOE beside any Darlington football player who admits to being content with his lot. For a star, Brian Little, the manager, will want to see them in his office. "If anyone feels like that I would need to talk about their future," he said. "I am not satisfied with people who are satisfied with what we have here, I want to go forward."

After an initial setback, forward is the only direction in which Darlington have moved since Little was installed as manager two years ago. The first retrograde step was demotion from the Football League to the GM Vauxhall Conference, but even then Little managed to disguise failure with a veneer of glamour.

Backed by vastly improved attendances at Feethams, Darlington made an immediate return to the League last season, and are now top of the fourth division.

Little's formula for success was to behave as if Darlington had the resources of a first-division club like Aston Villa, where, as a player, he made his mark as a stylish winger.

"Within the first three weeks of being in the Conference, I spent £50,000 on two new players, Kevin Smith from York, who had first-division experience with Coventry, and Andy Toman, from Cardiff. We retained a full-time professional staff, we stayed in hotels, our home-gates rose by 50 per cent, and everywhere we travelled it was like playing a cup-tie," he said.

Little admitted to being "unsettled" by the recent speculation which connected him with the managerial vacancy at Birmingham City. "At the moment I am happily ambitious where I am," he said.

was quite simple to attract players."

At the same time, Little was adhering to his philosophy of not tolerating dead wood. "In the last 18 months, 35 professionals have left this club and 23 others have come in," he said. "You could say I have been involved in the free transfer market."

Having coached at Wolverhampton Wanderers and Middlesbrough when both clubs were flirting with receivership, Little needs no warning about the need for good husbandry. At the age of 37, he has seen football from too many angles for that. "Playing, coaching and managing, I have been involved in all four divisions of the League, and the Conference," he said.

Had injury not interrupted his successful career ten years ago, it is conceivable that Little could still be playing. Most former players turned managers take Steve Coppell's line, that anything else is a poor substitute. Not Little. "I have played for England, and won medals with Villa, but I can honestly say that nothing I experienced then matches the way I felt when Darlington won at Welling to finish top of the Conference. I am not an emotional type but I was choking that day," he said.

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Cambridge threat, page 43

England's batting collapse brings a further defeat

WELLINGTON — The touring England cricketers continued where they left off in Australia by staging another spectacular batting collapse here yesterday to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in the second one-day international against New Zealand.

Chasing a moderate total of 197 to win at a rate of only 4.02 runs an over, England's brittle middle order surrendered spinelessly for the umpteenth time this winter. Their dismal performances with the bat prompted a host of jokes during the Ashes series in Australia. But at least they were up against bowlers of the class of Terry Alderman and Bruce Reid.

Here, the quality of the bowling was of a much lower order. But England, well poised at 147 for three, again let down their captain, Graham Gooch, who scored 41 in a first-wicket partnership of 73 in 18 overs with Michael Atherton.

Even after Gooch's departure, there seemed little for England to be concerned about. Despite David Gower's run-out for 11, Allan Lamb and Robin Smith put on 54 for the fourth wicket.

But with victory well in sight — only 41 runs were required off the final 12 overs — the wickets tumbled again, with Smith, Lamb, Jack Russell, Phillip DeFreitas, Martin Bicknell and Angus Fraser all being dismissed within the

space of seven overs — most of them playing across the line.

England were finally all out for 187, 10 runs short of the victory target that had looked easily obtainable only half an hour before.

Gooch could barely hide his anger at his side's performance. "It shows how a game can be turned around in just a few overs," he said. "The situation today has happened many times — a bit of pressure and a bit of panic and suddenly a winning position is turned into a very dicey position."

Earlier, Angus Fraser took three wickets at a cost of only 22 runs as New Zealand were restricted to 196 for eight off the 49 overs bowled.

Fraser, England's most consistent bowler of the Ashes tour, dismissed the openers, John Wright and Richard Reid, with only 25 on the scoreboard and then returned to claim the crucial wicket of Andrew Jones, who top-scored for the home side with 64.

His fellow fast-medium bowler, Martin Bicknell, largely overlooked in Australia but one of England's match-winners in the first one-day game against New Zealand at the weekend, chipped in with the vital wicket of Martin Crowe as New Zealand stumbled to 43 for three.

But Jones, supported by Ken Rutherford and Ian

Smith, steered New Zealand to respectability, with Bicknell in particular coming in for some heavy punishment, conceding 65 runs off his 10 overs, which included seven wides.

The final one-day game will be at Eden Park, Auckland, on Saturday.

● The Test matches and one-day internationals between West Indies and Australia — beginning with a one-day game on February 26 — will be screened live by BSkyB.

England won toss

NEW ZEALAND
R B Reid c Fraser 9
J G Wright c Fraser 9
M D Crowe c Russell b Bicknell 5
A H Jones b Fraser 64
K R Rutherford c and b Tufnell 19
C Z Harris c Russell b Tufnell 8
D S Smith b Bicknell 28
C L Cairns c Smith b DeFreitas 5
D S Smith b Bicknell 10
G R Lamb not out 18
Extras (lb 9 w 17) 20
Total (48 overs, 211 mins) 196

Wickets did not fall
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-25, 2-25, 3-43, 4-91, 5-109, 6-150, 7-158, 8-171.
BOWLING: Fraser 9-1-22-8 (w); Bicknell 10-4-52-6 (w); DeFreitas 10-6-21-17; Gooch 10-2-33-0 (w); Tufnell 10-0-45-2.

ENGLAND
G A Gooch c Wright b Cairns 41
M A Atherton c Cairns b Harris 28
D J Gower run out (Crowe) 11
A J Lamb b Cairns 24
R A Smith b Pringle 38
A J Stewart c and b Harris 18
P A J DeFreitas c Cairns b Harris 18
M P Bicknell c Cairns b Pringle 10
A C Fraser c Crowe b Pringle 5
P C R Turner not out 0
Extras (lb 8 w 7) 15
Total (48 overs, 189 mins) 187

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-73, 2-81, 3-93, 4-147, 5-160, 6-170, 7-173, 8-174, 9-187.
BOWLING: Pringle 10-1-43-3 (w); Watson 10-1-34-0 (w); Cairns 9-1-41-3 (w); Lamb 8-1-28-0 (w); Harris 10-0-33-3.
Man of the match: A H Jones.

Umpire: S J Woodward and R J Cowen.

Under-19 count the cost

NEW PLYMOUTH — England Under-19 enjoyed mixed fortunes on the opening day of the second Test match yesterday (a Special Correspondent writes). On an easy-paced pitch they restricted New Zealand to 281 for six, but did not help their cause by dropping five catches.

Blackmore was top scorer with 94 before giving a return catch to Smith, who claimed two economical wickets.

NEW ZEALAND UNDER-19: First Innings
S Blackmore c and b Smith 94
M Hartley b Chappell 24
L Howell c Weston b Chappell 24
S Fleming c Shaw b Smith 29
N Kettle c Rutherford b Broadhurst 22
J Purton not out 22
G Shaw b Weston 32
D Heath not out 0
Extras (lb 5, w 11, w 6, nb 1) 23
Total (48 overs, 189 mins) 281

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-32, 2-72, 3-140, 4-187, 5-222, 6-281.
BOWLING: Weston 13-4-39-1; Broadhurst 21-4-40-1; Chappell 23-4-37-2; Lowrey 11-3-39-0; Howies 19-4-47-0; Smith 13-6-22-2.



The back of Smith: having scored 38, the England batsman is bowled by Pringle

Sri Lanka add to firepower

FROM RICHARD STREETON IN COLOMBO

SRI Lanka have brought about the fitness of Anurasi, the left-arm spinner, who, in spite of a strained calf muscle, took 11 wickets at Kandy. A knee injury will keep de Silva out.

Kalpage, the first-choice off-spinner, is available for this match, and, as cover for Anurasi, Sri Lanka have called up Piyal Wijetunge, who toured England last year. They have also brought in Vijitha Deshapriya, a leg spinner who fights the ball more than Rajaratna, who bowls primarily top-spinners.

The pitch at the Sinhalese sports club is not expected to provide as much turn as the Agriya stadium, Kandy, but

there will certainly be some help for the Sri Lankans.

Ted Dexter, the England committee chairman, is expected to arrive here overnight to watch tomorrow's game.

Watching the young England batsmen rooted to the crease at Kandy, limiting themselves mostly to sweeping or making room to play through the off side, brought any confirmation needed that most of them had never seen such conditions before.

At a conference organised by the Central Council of Physical Recreation, Utley said that when academic studies came under pressure, PE became an option for "well meaning people". After intense academic work pupils needed some sort of release and sport could produce this, he said.

Hagger, the international heptathlete, said she wanted to see greater liaison between clubs and schools that would "help produce the winners for the future".

Sportsmen push PE in House

By JAMES GOUGH

LEADING sportsmen and women yesterday told a parliamentary select committee about the decline of sport in state schools and urged that there should be a minimum of two hours a week of physical education for all pupils.

Garth Crooks (football), Sharn Davies (swimming), Kim Hagger (athletics), Jeff Thompson (hockey) and Roger Utley (rugby union) addressed the House of Commons education, science and arts committee, which is enquiring into sport in schools, concentrating on how the decline in extra-curriculum PE can be halted by the broadening of the range of activities offered in schools and the amount of curriculum time devoted to the subject.

Before going to the House of Commons, Davies lamented the drop in the teaching of swimming in curriculum time, pointing out that, in 1990, 22.5 per cent of royal naval recruits and seven per cent of royal marine recruits failed the basic swimming test.

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Football feeling the chill

By LOUISE TAYLOR

TALK of a severe backlog of fixtures may be premature, but the weather is threatening to disrupt the FA Cup fifth round and Football League programmes this weekend.

A spokesman for the Football Association's competitions department said yesterday: "We are worried about all Saturday's FA Cup ties. None are off yet, but there probably will be by Friday." A spokesman for West Ham United said: "It is not officially off yet, but we are not at all confident that our Cup match with Crewe Alexandra will happen on Saturday."

Cambridge United spent yesterday removing eight inches of snow from a frozen pitch at the Abbey Stadium but were "optimistic" so long as there are no further snowfalls, that their fifth-round tie with Sheffield Wednesday will start on Saturday.

Similarly, a League spokesman said: "No League games are off yet, but I am sure some will be postponed within the next couple of days."

Although two FA Cup fourth-round ties and two third-division fixtures were expected to take place last night, six matches were postponed, including the Rumbold Cup semi-final first-leg tie between Chelsea and Sheffield Wednesday at Stamford Bridge.

There will be no resumption of racing on grass until next week at the earliest, but there is an all-weather card at Lingfield Park today, and Southwell tomorrow.

In rugby league, tonight's second-division matches between Keighley and Workington, and Swinton and Ryedale have been postponed.

Pieterse prepares for return BAAB steps into trial mess

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

ZOLA Pieterse, formerly Zola Budd, is preparing for a return to world athletics as soon as South Africa is welcomed back into international sport. In a reminder of her outstanding talent, she has just run her fastest race for five years, 8min 42.7sec for 3,000 metres in Stellenbosch.

An International Olympic Committee (IOC) commission visits South Africa next month to determine whether the time is right for the republic's return. The commission's report will go before the IOC session in June. It is possible that South Africa may be readmitted in time for the 1992 Olympic Games and Pieterse will seize the chance if it is presented.

"In the unlikely event that

the Commonwealth silver in Auckland last January.

Pieterse, aged 24, last competed in an international championship event at the 1986 Europeans. While running for Britain, she won two world cross-country titles, but returned to South Africa in 1988, missing the Seoul Olympics. The British record of 8:28.83 for 3,000 metres, which she set in 1985, still stands.

● Krish Mackerdhui, the South African Cricket Board president, and Mluleki George, president of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa, warned yesterday that sporting links with the republic must not resume until proof that all sports are fully integrated.

USUALLY it is the cross-country runners who get themselves in a sticky mess, but now there is mud all over British officialdom. They tried to wash it off yesterday by telling Bud Baldaro, the national event coach, to poll the athletes to find how they would like Britain to decide its world championship teams.

United Kingdom cross-country commission officials had gone ankle deep last weekend when they were late in spotting that the weather would prevent athletes from reaching the venue. The mud reached knee height on Monday when they rearranged the trials for two weeks before the world championship.

Then the more powerful British Amateur Athletic

Board overruled them. "We have asked Bud to phone round the athletes to see if they want a trial date on March 2 or for the selectors to pick on known form after the English championships on February 23," it said.

Which was mud up to their necks. Baldaro had wanted to accept the Women's Cross Country and Road Running Association's offer of trials in conjunction with the English women's championships in Birkenhead this Saturday.

It could not be arranged in time, he was told, but Baldaro contended that with some fast talking last Thursday it would have been possible.

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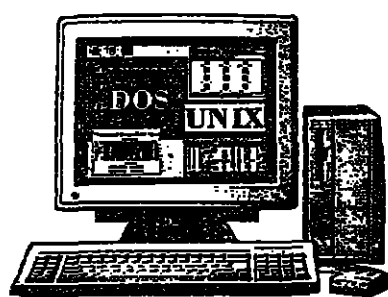
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Instead, after some fast

rounding, he found a 50-50 split. Taking a casting vote, he asked: "The board for even more angry about last weekend," he said. "There is no earthly reason why we could not have used Birkenhead. That we are in no man's land on February 13 is silly."

Tony Ward, the board's spokesman, said officers of the UK commission were bound to question the point of having a cross country commission. "But they have approached this as a UK championship, whereas the board looks upon it as a trial for the world championships," he said.

Sun.



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